BC University Student Outcomes

THE University Presidents' Council OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

2000 BC Universities Early Leavers Survey Highlights

In the Survey Highlights

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- *Why do they leave university?*
- *Why do "true leavers" depart university?*
- *What do "true leavers" gain from university?*
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- *What are "true leavers" doing now?*

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What does the survey reveal?

Two survey findings challenge the traditional notion of university attrition as unplanned and permanent departures from studies. First, 40 percent of all reported university departures were either planned or temporary, and second, 59 percent of all leavers enrolled at another post-secondary institution within 24 months. These results suggest a new perspective on attrition is required.

What is an early leaver?

Early leavers are those students who discontinue their university studies before earning a degree. For every 100 students who start undergraduate studies, between 30 and 50 will leave prior to degree completion. Not all departures, however, will be unplanned and permanent. Based on the survey results, early leavers were classified into seven categories:

- *Stopouts:* those planning to return to university soon.
- *Pre-planned transfers:* those planning to transfer to another institution to complete a degree.
- *Students preparing for a graduate program:* those preparing for graduate studies by taking undergraduate courses.
- *Students pursuing professional upgrade studies*: those taking courses for professional accreditation or upgrading.
- *Students pursuing other non-degree study*: those not pursuing degree study and not preparing for a graduate program or pursuing professionally-oriented studies.
- *Short-stay students:* those who departed within a very short time.
- *True leavers:* all degree-focused respondents who did not initially plan to withdraw or transfer and who had no expectation of returning to their university.

About the 2000 BC Universities Early Leavers Survey

The 2000 British Columbia Universities Early Leavers Survey was undertaken to explore university early leaver behaviour within the British Columbia context. The survey asked early leavers why they attended university and why they left, what they thought of their university experience, and what their educational and employment outcomes were.

For the purposes of the survey, early leavers were defined specifically as those non-graduating undergraduate students who last registered for classes at one of the four participating universities in either winter 1997/98, summer 1998, or winter 1998/99 and who had not since re-registered in the winter 1999/00 session as of November 1, 1999. The four universities that provided data for the survey were University of Northern British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia, and University of Victoria. Former students were contacted by telephone between January and March 2000—in all, 5,991 early leavers were surveyed, resulting in a response rate of 63 percent.

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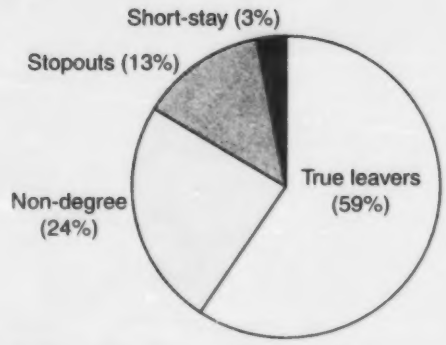
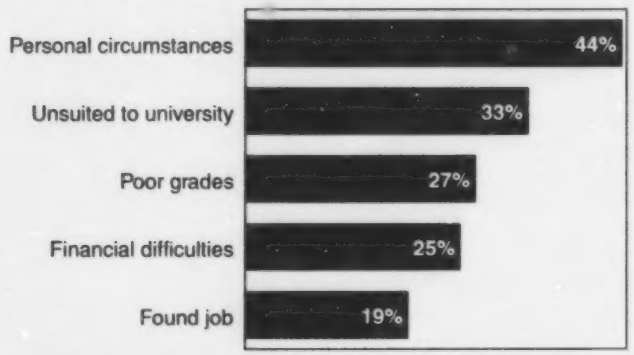
What is an early leaver (continued)?



categories of leavers

Almost 60 percent of the early leavers surveyed (the *true leavers*) conformed to the traditional notion of attrition as unplanned and permanent departure. However, 24 percent of leavers (the *non-degree* leavers) planned for early departure. Their intentions were to transfer to another institution, to prepare for graduate school, to get professional upgrading, or to pursue non-degree studies. Thirteen percent of respondents planned to return to their university soon, while 3 percent enrolled but did not stay long.

Why do they leave university?

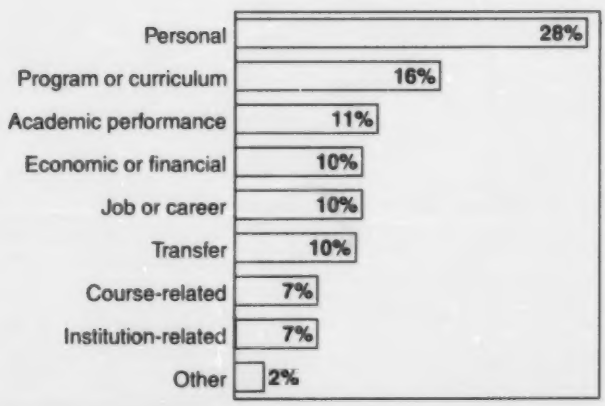


reasons for leaving

When asked to give their main reason for leaving university, respondents provided multiple reasons for their departures, such as poor academic performance, financial constraints, changed goals, personal factors, employment issues, and course or program dissatisfaction. When asked to respond to a list of specific reasons for leaving, 44 percent said they left due to family or personal circumstances.

Overall, 72 percent of early leavers felt positive or very positive about university at the time of their departure.

Why do *true leavers* depart university?



true leavers' reasons for leaving

As the *true leavers* category comprises 60 percent of the early leavers surveyed, and reflects unplanned departures by degree-seeking students who do not intend to return to their university, it is the leaver group of greatest interest.

The 3,556 *true leavers* were asked the question "What was your main reason for leaving?" When the responses were grouped (see the graph on the left), *personal* reasons comprised the largest category.

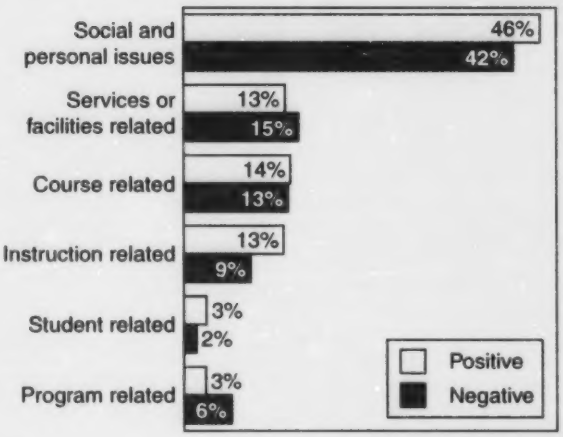
The most frequently mentioned individual reasons for departure were the requirement to withdraw (9%), shortage of financial resources (8%), the decision—arrived at after initial entry—to transfer (7%), unspecified personal reasons (6%), and illness or health factors (5%).

What do *true leavers* gain from university?

True leavers' responses to the question "What did you get from your university experience?" grouped around several key categories. Social and personal development responses comprised almost 37 percent of the answers and academic development was cited by 29 percent. Over three-quarters reported that university contributed to their personal growth either to a great extent (30%) or to some extent (46%).

True leavers reported that university contributed to personal growth.

True leavers were also asked about the positive or negative aspects of their first month at university. Interestingly, the aspects that some students found most positive were the ones that others found most negative. Responses relating to social and personal issues were cited most often.



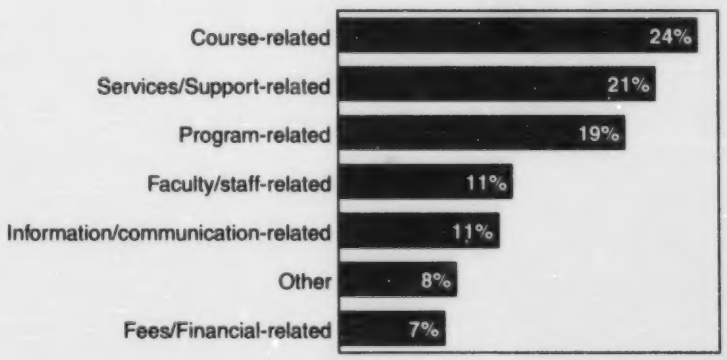
positive and negative aspects of university (first month)

In terms of course and program availability, 82 percent of *true leavers* reported that they successfully registered in all or most of their desired program, and 72 percent were able to enroll all or most of the courses they selected.

What more can universities do to help?

True leavers' opinions about the actions the university might have taken before their departure were concentrated around course-, service-, and program-related themes. The most frequently mentioned individual responses referred to course availability or waitlists (6%). Both "flexible schedule or location for working or part-time students" and "offer program content students want" were mentioned by 5 percent of respondents. Four percent specified better quality academic advising and 4 percent wanted "more or quicker access to academic advising."

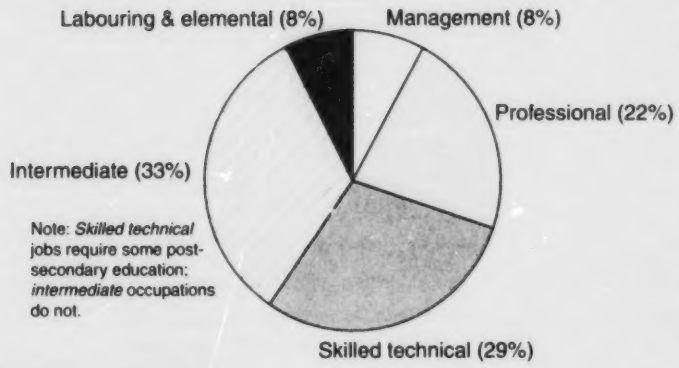
True leavers think that universities could make improvements in courses, services, and programs.



true leavers' suggestions for improvement

What are *true leavers* doing now?

Despite their permanent and unplanned departure from university, the majority of *true leavers* (60%) subsequently attended another institution. Although more than half of these enrolments were at BC colleges, almost 17 percent enrolled again in a BC university. Slightly less than 20 percent attended another Canadian post-secondary institution. One third of the *true leavers* who subsequently enrolled in post-secondary programs after leaving their 'home' university took the same or similar program of study at their new institution.


Labouring & elemental (8%)
Management (8%)
Professional (22%)
Intermediate (33%)
Skilled technical (29%)
Note: *Skilled technical* jobs require some post-secondary education; *intermediate* occupations do not.

skill level of occupations

At the time of the survey, 43 percent of *true leavers* were attending school. Forty percent were employed full-time, 5 percent were working part-time, and 3 percent were seeking work. Although 22 percent of employed *true leavers* were in occupations classified as professional, the majority were in occupations that did not require university graduation. The annualized salaries for employed *true leavers* averaged $34,000.

Most employed true leavers had jobs that did not require university graduation.

University Student Outcomes

The report of findings from the 2000 survey of British Columbia universities' early leavers was prepared for The University Presidents' Council of British Columbia by Chris Conway, former director of Institutional Research, University of Victoria.

This survey was conducted by the University Student Outcomes Project, which is a long-term research project dedicated to gathering student outcomes information for universities and the Province of British Columbia. The University Presidents' Council and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology established the project. It is directed by the University Outcomes Working Committee and is managed by the Centre for Education Information.

This summary, the *2000 British Columbia Universities Early Leavers Survey Highlights*, and the report, the *2000 British Columbia Universities Early Leavers Survey*, are available on the Internet from The University Presidents' Council of BC: http://www.tupc.bc.ca.

Limited quantities of print copies are available by e-mailing: publications@ceiss.org.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology

University Outcomes Working Committee

Centre For Education Information

THE University Presidents' Council
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The 2000 British Columbia Universities Early Leavers Survey

Chris Conway
January 2001

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Executive Summary

Early leavers are those students who discontinue their university studies before earning their degree. Depending on the specific definition applied, 30% or more of a university's entering undergraduate class will become early leavers rather than degree graduates. The definition and measurement of early leavers, and the analysis of their motivations and behaviour, are complicated by several factors. Not all university students intend to complete a degree; some transfer to other institutions to complete their studies; some take often extended breaks before resuming their study; and while some drop out having barely begun their program of study, others discontinue after several semesters of work. The perceptions, motivations, personal characteristics and study behaviours of early leavers are relevant to the design of university admission, orientation, advising and information services; the development of inter-institutional transfer procedures; and the construction of university accountability and reporting mechanisms.

This study was intended to provide a detailed, quantitative understanding of university early leaver behaviour within the British Columbia context. It examines the reasons why early leavers attend university and the reasons why they leave; their perceptions toward their university experience; their educational and employment experiences following their departure; and the implications of early leaver behaviour on service-, program-, institutional- and system-level planning.

Almost 6,000 early leavers from British Columbia's four established public universities responded to a telephone-based survey as little as eight months and as much as 24 months following their last reported attendance at university.

The survey results suggested seven distinct categories of early leavers:

- Stopouts: those leavers who indicated a high likelihood of returning to university soon;
- Pre-planned transfers: those who from the outset of their studies planned to transfer to another institution and hence, not complete a degree at their "home" university;
- Students preparing for a graduate program: those whose preparation for a graduate program involved non-degree undergraduate study;
- Students pursuing professional upgrading studies: those who were enrolled in specific courses, but not degree-focused study, for professional accreditation or upgrading reasons;

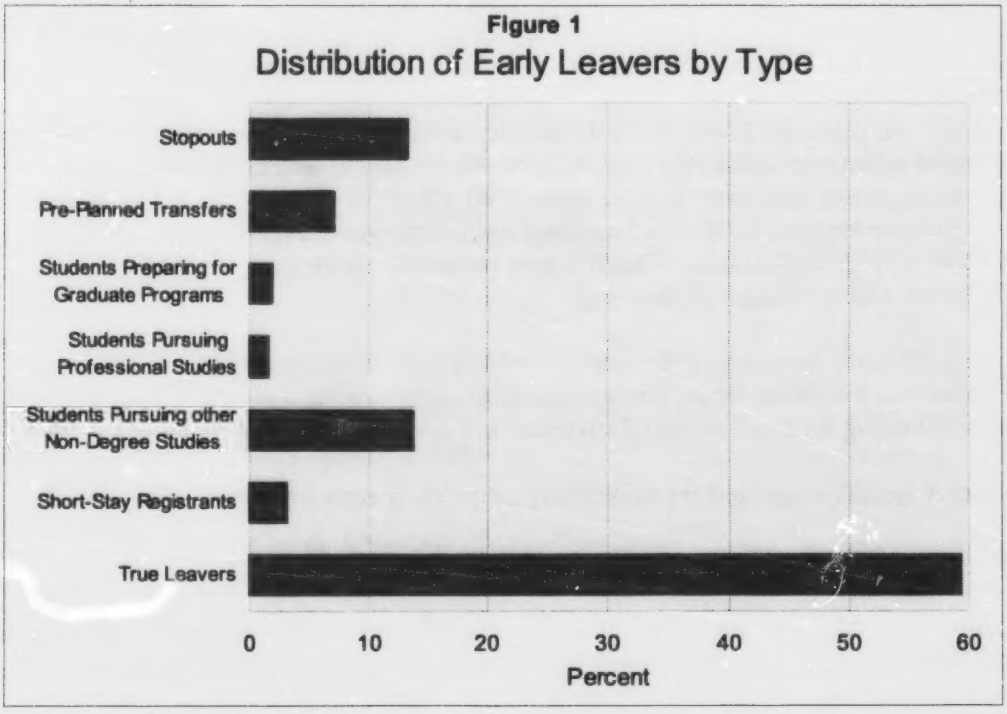
- Students pursuing other non-degree study: those remaining non-degree students who indicated no intention to pursue degree study but who were not preparing for a graduate program or pursuing professionally oriented studies;

- Short stay students: students who departed within a very short time of their arrival and who attended classes only briefly or not at all; and

- True leavers: all degree-focused students who did not initially plan to withdraw from university or transfer to another institution, and who had no expectation of returning to their university.

The distribution of early leavers by type indicates that about 60% of all leavers are "true leavers" and conform to the traditional notion of attrition, while about 40% had either planned to depart prior to earning their degree or currently intend to resume their studies.

Figure 1



As might be expected, reasons for departure vary both across and within the seven leaver groups. Within the true leaver group, the key specific student-reported factors in departure are:

- poor academic performance, including but not limited to, the student being required to withdraw;
- inadequacy of financial resources to continue study;
- the decision (arrived at sometime after the commencement of study) to transfer to another institution;
- changes in personal/life circumstances, including illness and family obligations;
- the search for, or commencement of employment; and
- dissatisfaction with, or unavailability of, the academic program in which the student was interested.

In reality, departure was often the result of these and other factors acting in combination rather than in isolation. For example, some students reported that financial difficulties contributed to stress, inattentiveness, and ultimately, poor grades.

Despite their early departure, many leavers reported that their university experiences were positive; they assigned generally high satisfaction ratings to most university services; and they reported that their lives have been positively affected as a result of their university study. In the minority of cases where negative experiences were reported, they generally involved poor student access to timely advising, social isolation and loneliness, and such course and program factors as large class sizes and program unavailability.

A number of conclusions and implications arise from the analysis:

- The definition of early leavers and criteria for the classification of early leaver groups must be standardized if inter-institutional and inter-jurisdictional analysis is to move forward.
- The wording of various questions must be improved, including those related to reasons for departure, the specifics of inter-institutional transfer, the timing of particular departure decisions and events, and the nature of intervening circumstances.
- Additional information from the student records system would allow more detailed analysis of variations in departure motivations and behaviour. This information could include student full-/part-time status, study year or percentage of program completed, and previous stopout behaviour.
- Forty percent of leavers experienced planned or temporary departure. Fifty-nine percent of leavers subsequently attended another post-secondary institution. Traditional notions of attrition, and particularly of attrition as institutional or student failure, are not justified by the survey data.

- BC's post-secondary transfer environment supports a wide variety of transfer behaviour.

- The demographic and behavioural differences between leaver groups are not stark enough to permit the development of a clear risk profile. To this extent, universities are limited in their ability to direct interventions toward "at risk" students. The results do, however, suggest certain attrition "warning signs"; university students could be encouraged to self-assess against these warning signs and self-identify for services as appropriate.

- Because of differences in the composition of the student body across institutions, university accountability regarding attrition should be managed at both the institutional and the system level. The central components of accountability reporting should be (a) demonstrating the various types of attrition motivation/behaviour (i.e., for various classes of leaver groups), (b) documenting how service and policy interventions are consistent with leaver motivation and behaviour, and (c) conducting further research that will support the development of statistical models of attrition behaviour.

Introduction

Who Are Early Leavers and Why Should We Study Them?

Early leavers are those students who discontinue their university studies before earning their degree. This study is concerned specifically with undergraduate early leavers—that is, those students who withdraw from or otherwise discontinue their university studies before earning a baccalaureate credential.

By this definition, undergraduate university students ultimately become either graduates or early leavers. Though rates vary institution by institution, for every hundred students who commence undergraduate university study, between 50 and 70 go on to complete their degrees, while between 30 and 50 leave prior to doing so.

On further examination, the definition and measurement of early leaver behaviour is quite complex.

First, not all university students embark on their studies intending to complete a degree program of study. Some, for example, plan to complete only a few courses for general interest. Others register in a defined package of courses in order to achieve professional upgrading or accreditation. In either case, the study behaviour of such students must be viewed in a different context from those students who are in fact degree focused.

Second, some students transfer (with or without having earned transferable credits) from one institution to another. Though these students are clearly early leavers from the original university's perspective, they continue to study within the university sector or within the broader post-secondary system. This group includes students who intended from the outset to transfer and complete their degree at another university; those who came to that realization later in their studies; those who completed undergraduate coursework in preparation for enrolling in a graduate program; and those who transferred to a non-university institution to pursue non-degree study. Transfer behaviour of these types is not only facilitated but also explicitly encouraged in the Province of British Columbia through government policy and institutional practice.

Third, some students take one or more breaks in their university studies, "stopping out" for one or more semesters before completing their coursework. The financial pressures of continuous enrolment, study fatigue, changes in personal or family circumstances, and work or other time pressures are all associated with a student's decision to stop out. Thus, even the basic definition and measurement of early leaver behaviour is contingent on the timing of any assessment of the student's enrolment status (since the number of stopout students captured in an analysis will decline as the time since their last registration increases).

Fourth, some students discontinue their studies after only a few days or weeks of classes (and in some cases, even before classes commence), while others do so after a more prolonged period of study. In rare cases, students leave having completed all but one or two of the courses required for their degrees. The factors underlying the departure of students who register but never really attend are clearly different from those affecting the departure of those who have made a substantial time commitment to their studies.

Fifth, the factors underlying student departure are complex. Numerous studies have identified some of the key causes. These include students' personal financial situations, their academic preparation for university and/or their academic performance at university, life changes occurring during their program of study, unsatisfied expectations of the program and/or the institution, a lack of socialization to the campus or university life, students' personal characteristics such as persistence, and other factors. The roles of these factors and the interactions between them are critical to understanding the dynamics of attrition and designing (or deciding whether to design) appropriate interventions.

In other words, a student's early departure from an undergraduate program of study may be voluntary or involuntary, academic or non-academic in origin, planned or unplanned, temporary or permanent, "positive" or "negative"; and it may be subject to ambiguous measurement and definition (in the case of inter-institutional transfer, stopout and short-stay study). This complexity is in sharp contrast to the traditional (but still prevalent) notions that "successful" university students are those who complete their degree study following four years of more or less continuous study, and that pre-degree departure signals a failure on the part of the student, the institution, or both.

The personal characteristics of early leavers, their perceptions and study behaviour while at university, the reasons for their departure, and their post-university experiences are of significant interest to post-secondary education policy and practice. For example, if certain types of students are indeed at risk of departing under involuntary or "negative" conditions, then a profile of "at risk" students could provide the university with the opportunity to design and target appropriate interventions. If leavers display consistent patterns of service dissatisfaction or harbour negative attitudes toward their campus experience, this information may contribute to the design of better orientation and information services. The relative importance of academic and non-academic factors in students' departure decisions can inform the design of admissions, academic advising and other academic support services. The rate at which planned and unplanned transfer behaviour occurs, and the types of institutions and programs to which students transfer, can guide the development of system-wide transfer and credit articulation policies. The educational and employment experiences of leavers after their departure can provide insight into the value of non-degree study from a labour market perspective. And finally, a clearer understanding of the entire early leaver phenomenon increases the accountability of universities by providing them with the information to demonstrate and improve on their service and program effectiveness.

An Overview of the BC Universities Early Leavers Project

This study was intended to supplement general information and insights like those presented above with a more detailed, quantitative understanding of early leaver behaviour within the specific British Columbia context.

For several years, British Columbia's publicly funded universities have conducted surveys of their baccalaureate degree graduates one, two or five years following graduation. The annual surveys are funded by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (MAETT) and coordinated by the University Presidents' Council (TUPC). These surveys have generated system-, institution- and program-level information about services and programs and have increased the universities' level of accountability by providing empirical labour market and satisfaction information on graduates.

To the extent that about one-third of all university entrants ultimately become early leavers, it was felt that an analysis of the behaviours, perceptions, experiences and current situations of leavers would increase university accountability, provide a perspective on university outcomes to balance that generated by the graduate follow-up surveys, and provide information to guide service, program and policy development within not only the universities but also the Ministry, BC colleges and institutes, and such organizations as the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer.

As with the graduate follow-up surveys, this survey of early leavers was sponsored by MAETT and coordinated through TUPC. The project was designed and managed by a steering committee consisting of Walter Sudmant (UBC), Walter Wattamaniuk (SFU), Carol Yates (UNBC) and Chris Conway (UVic). The Centre for Education Information Standards and Services (CEISS) served as project consultant and was represented by Joseph Calado (project manager), Nancy Vaughan and Jacquie McDonald (technical support). Venture Market Research Ltd. was contracted to perform the survey fieldwork. CEISS and Chris Conway were contracted by TUPC to undertake the analysis and prepare the final reports.

Purposes of the Early Leavers Survey

This study was intended to be exploratory, rather than definitive. Its specific purposes were:

(a) to identify the reasons early leavers attended university, the reasons they left, and the possible relationships between these reasons;
(b) to measure leaver perceptions toward their university experience, the impacts of having attended, and their satisfaction with and usage of specific services prior to their departure;

(c) to determine the educational and employment experiences of students following their departure from university;
(d) to develop a behavioural and demographic profile of early leavers based both on survey responses and information obtained from the academic records of survey respondents; and
(e) to relate the survey findings to the design of university services and programs and the development of post-secondary system policy and accountability.

The Definition of Early Leavers

As indicated above, early leavers are defined generally as those students who withdraw from or otherwise discontinue their university studies before earning a baccalaureate credential. For the specific purposes of this study, they were defined as those non-graduating undergraduate students who last registered for classes at one of the four participating universities in the winter 1997/98 session (September 1997 – April 1998), the summer 1998 session (May 1998 – August 1998) or the winter 1998/99 session (September 1998 – April 1999) and who had not since re-registered in the winter 1999/00 session (September 1999 – April 2000) as of the official count date (approximately November 1, 1999).

The population was further defined to exclude several classes of students who by their very nature tend to display study behaviour that is not consistent with normal definitions of attrition. These included students admitted on visiting, transfer, exchange and letter-of-permission status (who are studying elsewhere but apply to attend another institution on a temporary basis only); students whose academic record indicated that they had been admitted and had perhaps registered in courses, but who had never actually attended classes or who had withdrawn or otherwise exited before the official session count date (see below); and students who attended university on a student visa/diplomatic visa (who are generally difficult to contact outside of Canada, and whose study behaviour is influenced by various factors that are different from those of Canadian students).

Because of slight variations in registration and withdrawal procedures, record-keeping practices and session/semester definitions at each of the universities, the sample definitions are very similar, but not necessarily identical, for each of the universities.

Survey Sample and Fieldwork Information

Table 1 summarizes the sample size and response information for the survey. Visiting students, students who had never registered, and visa students were successfully excluded from the samples generated by the universities. Of the 11,926 records generated for the sample by the universities, 2,411 additional records were eliminated for various other reasons:

(a) 501 contained entirely blank address, telephone or forwarding contact information;
(b) 512 were tracked to locations outside North America (which, by prior agreement with the fieldwork contractor, were deemed out of sample);
(c) 1,311 claimed not to have attended university (256), to still be in attendance (779) or to have graduated (276). In the latter two cases, they were erroneously included in the sample because of the timing of the sample draw relative to the updating of registration and/or graduation records;
(d) 87 were unavailable for other reasons (serious illness, deceased, etc.).

5,993 of the 9,515 eligible respondents completed surveys, for a 63% response rate. Nine percent could not be reached after repeated callbacks; 8% refused to participate in the survey; and 21% could not be contacted because of outdated or not-in-service contact information that the contractor was unable to update. Subsequent reclassification of two respondents resulted in a final sample size of 5,991.

Survey fieldwork commenced in February 2000 and was completed by May 2000.

Questionnaire Design

Because this research was exploratory in nature, the steering committee wanted to ensure that the questionnaire captured the full depth and breadth of student responses. As a result, a number of key questions were asked in open-ended format and entered verbatim, rather than in forced choice format or with pre-established response categories. These questions dealt with the students' goals for attending university (Question B3), their reasons for selecting their university (B5), the positive and negative aspects of their first month of university study (C2 and C3), the impacts of their university experience (D4D), their main reasons for leaving university (E1A), and what the university could have done to assist at the time of their departure (E8). These verbatim responses were examined following completion of the fieldwork, and a coding scheme was developed at that time. Responses to these questions were subsequently post-coded using one or two 2-digit codes per response.

Table 1

Sample and Response Information by University

	UBC		SFU		UVic		UNBC		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gross Sample	**3239**		**3574**		**3833**		**1280**		**11926**	
Out of Sample	**774**		**639**		**826**		**172**		**2411**	
no phone number/address	157		19		298		27		501	
outside North America	189		131		165		27		512	
did not attend university	47		71		94		44		256	
still attending university	234		343		143		59		779	
graduated from university	124		44		103		5		276	
other	23		31		23		10		87	
Net Sample	**2465**		**2935**		**3007**		**1108**		**9515**	
completed	1513	61.4%	1829	62.3%	1959	65.1%	690	62.3%	5991	63.0%
no contact after callbacks	210	8.5%	281	9.6%	231	7.7%	89	8.0%	811	8.5%
refusals	204	8.3%	285	9.7%	188	6.3%	69	6.2%	746	7.8%
not-in-service	539	21.9%	539	18.4%	627	20.9%	260	23.5%	1965	20.7%

Table 1

Sample and Response Information by University

	UBC		SFU		UVIc		UNBC		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gross Sample	**3239**		**3574**		**3833**		**1280**		**11926**	
Out of Sample	**774**		**639**		**826**		**172**		**2411**	
no phone number/address	157		19		298		27		501	
outside North America	189		131		165		27		512	
did not attend university	47		71		94		44		256	
still attending university	234		343		143		59		779	
graduated from university	124		44		103		5		276	
other	23		31		23		10		87	
Net Sample	**2465**		**2935**		**3007**		**1108**		**9515**	
completed	1513	61.4%	1829	62.3%	1959	65.1%	690	62.3%	5991	63.0%
no contact after callbacks	210	8.5%	281	9.6%	231	7.7%	89	8.0%	811	8.5%
refusals	204	8.3%	285	9.7%	188	6.3%	69	6.2%	746	7.8%
not-in-service	539	21.9%	539	18.4%	627	20.9%	260	23.5%	1965	20.7%

A Typology of University Early Leavers in BC

Guided in part by the discussion above, and following a preliminary analysis of the survey responses, the respondents were classified into several categories of early leavers, each of which defines a reasonably distinct set of student motivations and behaviours. In all cases, classification was based on the students' responses to specific questions.

Stopouts

Stopouts were defined as those leavers who indicated it was "very likely" they would return within 12 months to the university from which they had departed (Question G1). Though by no means a conclusive criterion, these students' strong commitment to return suggests it would be premature to classify them as leavers at this point in time. Nine hundred and thirty-one of the 5,991 students were initially classified as stopouts; 132 were subsequently reclassified as pre-planned transfers or as students pursuing non-degree study. The final count of 799 self-identified stopouts represents 13.3% of the total sample.

Pre-Planned Transfers

Pre-planned transfers are defined as those leavers who stated they had planned to transfer to another institution from the outset of their university studies (Question E2B) or who indicated an initial intention to transfer in Question E1A. (Most, but not all, have in fact subsequently transferred, but the definition is based on their stated prior intention to transfer rather than their actually having done so as of the date of the survey.) Pre-planned transfers exclude students preparing for a graduate program of study (see below). This group contains 424 respondents, or 7.1% of the total sample. (677 respondents were initially classified as pre-planned transfers, but 253 were re-assigned to the "other non-degree" category.)

Students Preparing for Graduate Programs

Students who were enrolled in an undergraduate program as preparation for subsequent enrolment in graduate study were defined (a) as those who were currently enrolled in a graduate program at the same university (Question A1A), or (b) as those who reported that they had completed the requirements for a graduate program without earning an undergraduate degree (Question A2). By prior arrangement with the fieldwork contractor, the survey was not administered to these students; the only information available for them is that obtained from their student record. A total of 111 respondents fell into this category, representing 1.9% of the total sample.

Students Pursuing Professional Upgrade Studies

This group contains those students who indicated they had pursued a post-degree or professional accreditation program at university (Question A2) that led to a non-degree credential or contributed to a non-credential objective. By prior arrangement with the fieldwork contractor, the survey was not administered to these students; the only information available for them is that obtained from their student record. A total of 95 respondents fell into this category, representing 1.6% of the total sample.

Students Pursuing Other Non-Degree Studies

This group consists of students not already classified above as pre-planned transfers, students preparing for graduate programs or students pursuing post-degree or professional studies, who reported that they did not intend to earn a degree or diploma at the time they first enrolled at university (Question B2), and a much smaller number of additional students who indicated that they had completed as much university study as they wanted to (Question E1A). In other words, these students had no degree goals, but also had no transfer intentions, no graduate study plans, and no professional certification objectives. Eight hundred and eighteen students, or 13.7% of the total sample, were pursuing these non-degree studies. (Net of the re-assignment of 253 records from the "pre-planned transfer" group, students pursuing other non-degree studies would number only 565, or 9.4% of the total sample.)

Short-Stay Registrants

Students with very brief academic histories at university were dealt with in three different ways.

First (as indicated above), students who were identified by their academic records as having never registered for classes or having withdrawn prior to the official count date, were excluded from the sample. However, differences in registration procedures, record-keeping practices and student withdrawal behaviour across the universities resulted in some short stay registrants remaining in the sample.

Second, some students contacted for the survey indicated they had never actually attended classes or had done so only briefly, and were eliminated from the sample at that time, because they did not consider themselves to have been students. These students can be further classified into two groups: those who had in fact never attended classes or who had done so only briefly, and those who denied their attendance at the university (despite an academic record that clearly indicated attendance), most likely because they had subsequently registered elsewhere without providing complete transcripts to their new institution. The latter group is in the minority, but highlights an interesting dimension in BC's post-secondary transfer environment.

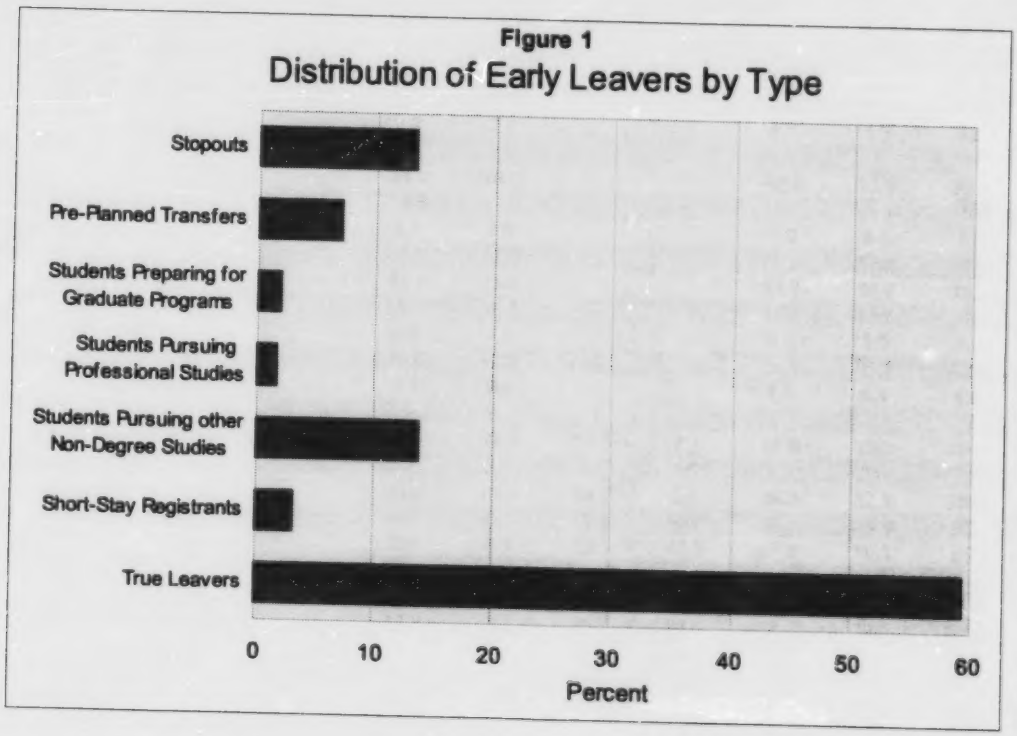
Third, some students indicated they had attended university, if only briefly, but that they were nonetheless willing to participate in the survey. Their study patterns clearly overlap with those in the first two groups. As a result, the sample under-represents the total number of short-stay leavers and, unfortunately, includes them using inconsistent criteria. With this qualification, the sample contains 188 short-stay registrants representing 3.1% of the total.

True Leavers

The six categories of leavers classified above do not conform to traditional notions of student attrition. Some plan to return to their university to resume their studies soon. Others are currently involved with, or plan to be involved with, another post-secondary institution. Some planned to depart prior to earning their degree. And some did not actually attend classes or attended for only a brief period of time before withdrawing.

By comparison, true leavers are defined in this study as those departing students who have no expectation of returning to their "home" university in the near future, who did not initially plan to withdraw or transfer prior to earning their degree, and who attended their university beyond a critical "threshold" date. By this definition, 3,556 respondents, or 59.4% of the total sample were classified as true leavers.

Figure 1



Summary

The following sections will examine each of the leaver groups in more detail. The "true leaver" group will be subject to much deeper examination than the other groups.

Table 2

Profile of Leavers

	Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Grad Preps	Prof'l Upgrade	Non-Degree	Short-Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
Demographic Characteristics								
Number of leavers	799	424	111	95	818	188	3,556	5,991
% of Sample	13.3	7.1	1.9	1.6	13.7	3.1	59.4	100.0
Female (%)	53.9	55.0	61.3	75.8	62.5	60.1	56.3	57.2
Physical disability (%)	7.4	5.2	5.4	1.1	3.5	5.9	5.2	5.2
Aboriginal (%)	4.8	5.9	8.1	2.1	10.5	5.3	3.3	4.8
Visible Minority (%)	23.8	34.0	18.0	5.3	18.0	26.7	18.9	20.6
Age (%)								
less than 20	24.7	38.5	0.0	0.0	18.6	38.5	25.8	25.1
20 - 24.9	38.6	38.6	23.4	12.6	29.3	29.4	45.2	40.2
25 - 29.9	15.7	22.0	25.2	20.0	13.9	12.8	12.3	13.4
30 or more	21.0	10.9	51.4	67.4	38.2	19.3	16.7	21.3
Mean age (years)	26.0	23.3	33.6	36.3	30.2	25.6	24.9	26.0
Application/Admission Issues								
Applied to other institutions (%)	48.6	63.4			35.6	53.7	51.3	49.7
University was first choice (%)	85.1	58.4			48.8	36.6	80.5	74.3
Sure of major @ first enrolling (%)	77.6	75.9			72.0	88.3	75.8	75.9
Intend degree @ first enrolling (%)	99.4	96.2			0.0	97.3	97.0	83.6
Goal when first enrolling (%)								
courses	2.9	8.6			53.0	1.7	2.9	10.2
credential/degree	80.7	77.2			11.3	84.2	81.0	71.1
job/career	3.4	2.2			3.7	2.8	2.6	2.8
learning/education	9.2	8.1			22.4	9.0	10.6	11.8
university specific	1.5	1.5			5.5	0.8	1.3	1.9
other	2.3	2.4			4.1	1.7	1.6	2.2
Attended university because ("great extent" %)								
close to family	33.2	38.0			42.2	23.9	30.3	32.7
friends also attended	15.6	17.9			18.1	11.7	15.8	16.1
campus lifestyle	8.1	7.8			5.9	5.3	7.5	7.3
program availability	56.8	44.3			51.5	57.4	51.8	52.0
program quality	51.1	33.3			27.8	36.7	39.3	38.8
lower living costs	25.5	30.7			27.8	16.5	20.9	23.1
not accepted elsewhere	2.6	7.8			8.5	3.0	3.7	4.4
geographic location	42.6	42.9			54.3	35.1	42.6	44.0
lower admission requirements	3.1	8.3			7.1	6.4	4.6	5.1
Admission class (%)								
BC secondary	47.1	59.2	13.5	2.1	27.6	36.2	49.3	44.9
out of province secondary	5.8	5.0	5.4	0.0	2.9	8.0	7.3	6.2
BC college	29.2	19.8	15.3	8.4	14.3	22.3	25.6	23.5
other post-secondary	8.6	7.8	42.3	40.0	17.2	23.4	9.2	11.7
other	9.4	8.3	23.4	49.5	37.9	10.1	8.7	13.7
Admission GPA (%)								
A	35.1	43.9	58.2	51.4	57.0	73.1	44.5	45.7
B	43.8	46.0	36.7	38.6	34.7	24.0	38.5	39.5
C	14.9	8.4	5.1	10.0	7.5	3.0	12.0	11.3
D or less	6.1	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	3.8	3.5
Transferring credits (%)	40.7	33.2	22.1	19.8	29.0	36.4	38.1	36.5
Living arrangements (%)								
at home with parents	48.7	49.3			39.5	37.8	40.1	41.8
university residence	14.1	13.0			7.9	9.8	18.7	16.4
other	37.2	37.7			52.6	52.6	40.2	41.8

Table 2

Profile of Leavers

	Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Grad Preps	Prof'l Upgrade	Non-Degree	Short-Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
Demographic Characteristics								
Number of leavers	799	424	111	95	818	188	3,556	5,991
% of Sample	13.3	7.1	1.9	1.6	13.7	3.1	59.4	100.0
Female (%)	53.9	55.0	61.3	75.8	62.5	60.1	56.3	57.2
Physical disability (%)	7.4	5.2	5.4	1.1	3.5	5.9	5.2	5.2
Aboriginal (%)	4.8	5.9	8.1	2.1	10.5	5.3	3.3	4.8
Visible Minority (%)	23.8	34.0	18.0	5.3	18.0	28.7	18.9	20.6
Age (%)								
less than 20	24.7	38.5	0.0	0.0	18.6	38.5	25.8	25.1
20 - 24.9	38.6	38.6	23.4	12.6	29.3	29.4	45.2	40.2
25 - 29.9	15.7	22.0	25.2	20.0	13.9	12.8	12.3	13.4
30 or more	21.0	10.9	51.4	67.4	38.2	19.3	16.7	21.3
Mean age (years)	26.0	23.3	33.6	36.3	30.2	25.6	24.9	26.0
Application/Admission Issues								
Applied to other institutions (%)	48.6	63.4			35.6	53.7	51.3	49.7
University was first choice (%)	85.1	58.4			48.8	36.6	80.5	74.3
Sure of major @ first enrolling (%)	77.6	75.9			72.0	88.3	75.8	75.9
Intend degree @ first enrolling (%)	99.4	96.2			0.0	97.3	97.0	83.6
Goal when first enrolling (%)								
courses	2.9	8.6			53.0	1.7	2.9	10.2
credential/degree	80.7	77.2			11.3	84.2	81.0	71.1
job/career	3.4	2.2			3.7	2.8	2.6	2.8
learning/education	9.2	8.1			22.4	9.0	10.6	11.8
university specific	1.5	1.5			5.5	0.6	1.3	1.9
other	2.3	2.4			4.1	1.7	1.6	2.2
Attended university because ("great extent" %)								
close to family	33.2	38.0			42.2	23.9	30.3	32.7
friends also attended	15.6	17.9			18.1	11.7	15.8	16.1
campus lifestyle	8.1	7.8			5.9	5.3	7.5	7.3
program availability	56.8	44.3			51.5	57.4	51.6	52.0
program quality	51.1	33.3			27.8	36.7	39.3	38.8
lower living costs	25.5	30.7			27.8	16.5	20.9	23.1
not accepted elsewhere	2.6	7.8			8.5	3.0	3.7	4.4
geographic location	42.6	42.9			54.3	35.1	42.6	44.0
lower admission requirements	3.1	8.3			7.1	6.4	4.6	5.1
Admission class (%)								
BC secondary	47.1	59.2	13.5	2.1	27.6	36.2	49.3	44.9
out of province secondary	5.8	5.0	5.4	0.0	2.9	8.0	7.3	6.2
BC college	29.2	19.8	15.3	8.4	14.3	22.3	25.6	23.5
other post-secondary	8.6	7.8	42.3	40.0	17.2	23.4	9.2	11.7
other	9.4	8.3	23.4	49.5	37.9	10.1	8.7	13.7
Admission GPA (%)								
A	35.1	43.9	58.2	51.4	57.0	73.1	44.5	45.7
B	43.8	46.0	36.7	38.6	34.7	24.0	39.5	39.5
C	14.9	8.4	5.1	10.0	7.5	3.0	12.0	11.3
D or less	6.1	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	3.9	3.5
Transferring credits (%)	40.7	33.2	22.1	19.8	29.0	36.4	38.1	36.5
Living arrangements (%)								
at home with parents	48.7	49.3			39.5	37.8	40.1	41.8
university residence	14.1	13.0			7.9	9.6	19.7	16.4
other	37.2	37.7			52.6	52.6	40.2	41.8

Table 2 (continued)

Profile of Leavers

	Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Grad Preps	Prof'l Upgrade	Non-Degree	Short-Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
Financial Issues								
Applied for gov't assistance (%)	34.3	34.7			19.7	23.4	31.0	29.9
Awarded gov't assistance (%)	38.0	38.4			22.0	22.9	34.1	32.9
Primary source of funding (%)								
employment	33.0	24.5			37.8	27.7	28.9	30.4
parents/relatives	26.2	36.8			17.6	29.8	29.2	27.7
student loan	18.8	17.5			10.5	12.8	17.6	16.6
savings	7.5	8.5			13.3	11.7	9.8	10.0
other	14.5	12.7			20.8	18.0	14.5	15.3
Perceptions and Satisfaction								
First month at university (%)								
positive	70.2	55.2			70.5	31.4	63.4	63.7
negative	10.5	15.6			5.9	10.1	12.6	11.5
neither	19.3	29.2			23.6	58.5	24.0	24.8
Top positive aspects of 1st month (%)								
culture/ambience of university	12.6	17.7			10.3	11.0	12.4	12.4
meeting people	6.9	6.8				6.8	8.5	7.5
newness/excitement	6.8	7.1				6.8	7.0	6.3
courses (general)					7.6		6.4	6.3
facilities/campus	5.6	8.1			5.7		5.8	5.9
professors (quality)	5.4				10.7	11.0		5.7
professors (general/unspecified)		7.7			6.3	6.8		5.1
Top negative aspects of 1st month (%)								
loneliness/isolation	7.1				6.6	8.3	10.9	9.5
culture/ambience of university		12.3					8.3	7.8
culture shock	9.7						6.8	6.5
class sizes		6.2			4.9		5.2	5.0
transition from secondary school	6.2	6.2						4.8
facilities/campus							4.7	4.3
large size of institution	8.0							3.9
approachability of professors	8.0							3.9
course unavailability		6.2			4.9			3.0
professors (quality)		4.9			4.9			2.2
information flows						8.3		1.7
professors (general/unspecified)					4.9			1.5
distance education courses						8.3		1.1
Able to register in desired program (%)	85.4	79.5			81.7	76.6	81.9	82.0
Registered in all/most of desired courses during last session (%)	73.2	66.5			80.6	53.2	72.2	72.5
Satisfaction with credit transfer("yes" %)	77.8	74.0			75.9	66.6	72.9	74.0
Satisfaction ("very satisfied" %)								
professor availability outside class	28.9	17.0			38.4	small	23.1	25.2
quality of instruction	28.4	22.4			40.5	sample	24.0	26.6
fairness of grading practices	37.5	25.7			49.0	size; large	35.4	36.3
university library	45.6	33.5			29.1	number of	39.6	37.7
computing labs	21.5	20.5			17.2	"not appl"	19.8	19.4
science labs	13.6	12.5			7.6	responses	11.7	11.2
Used services prior to departure (%)								
academic advising	43.8	33.5			17.1	23.9	35.8	33.7
personal counselling	16.3	16.5			7.1	8.0	12.9	12.7
study skills counselling	9.0	13.2			7.2	2.1	10.3	9.6
advice from others	40.1	50.9			23.7	40.4	49.3	44.2

Table 2 (continued)

Profile of Leavers

	Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Grad Preps	Prof'l Upgrade	Non-Degree	Short-Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
Perception of university at departure (%)								
very positive	23.0	13.9			30.2	11.2	15.2	18.2
positive	56.2	55.0			54.0	53.2	53.4	54.0
negative	14.4	19.1			9.3	11.2	21.0	18.0
very negative	3.1	5.4			2.2	4.3	6.6	5.3
Top things university could have done (%)								
improve course availability	4.3	6.4			7.2	11.4	5.6	5.8
improve course scheduling	6.3				8.8		4.7	5.2
improve program content		8.2			10.8	4.3	4.7	5.1
better access to academic advising	5.1	5.3						3.7
better academic advising quality							4.0	3.5
more personalized services		5.8					3.4	3.3
better distance education program	5.1					5.7		3.1
improve professor quality					4.0			2.3
better course variety					6.0			2.0
more personal counselling		4.7						1.9
more flexibility re. special needs	4.3							1.6
info. on (re)registration procedures						4.3		0.7
info. on academic leaves						4.3		0.6
Study Behaviour								
Attended single session (%)	20.0	38.0	27.0	26.3	56.6	90.9	28.3	33.6
Months attended total (%)								
four	18.4	26.8			37.4	5.8	26.2	26.5
eight	52.5	40.1			23.9	1.8	49.3	38.6
other	29.1	33.1			38.7	92.4	24.5	34.9
Attended multiple sessions (%)	80.0	62.0	73.0	73.7	43.4	9.1	71.7	66.4
Months attended last session (%)								
four	71.6	77.6			65.8	33.3	69.1	69.7
eight	2.4	2.3			3.8	5.6	2.3	2.5
other	26.0	20.1			30.4	61.1	28.6	27.8
Cumulative GPA (%)								
A	7.7	3.8	58.5	40.0	26.0	1.3	9.0	12.7
B	31.2	29.2	30.5	50.0	35.5	2.6	32.8	32.6
C	37.7	28.2	6.1	4.4	20.2	1.3	35.8	31.0
D or less	23.4	38.9	4.9	5.6	18.3	94.8	22.5	23.7
Last Session GPA (%)								
A	12.9	6.6	61.0	36.0	30.0	1.6	10.9	15.5
B	25.4	25.5	25.6	38.2	31.0	3.2	27.3	27.4
C	21.4	20.2	2.4	5.6	15.4	0.0	41.4	19.2
D or less	40.3	47.7	11.0	20.2	23.7	95.2	40.4	37.9
Likelihood of returning ("very likely" %)	100.0	15.1			8.3	0.0	0.0	16.1
Attempted/earned credits (%)								
mean total credits registererd in	41.0	31.7	26.0	24.9	16.0		35.4	30.8
mean total credits completed	34.9	25.9	24.8	24.9	14.3	see	30.5	26.6
mean last sess credits registered in	9.9	10.5	8.2	10.0	7.2	notes	10.5	9.6
mean last sess credits completed	6.8	6.9	7.5	9.8	5.9		7.5	6.9

Table 2 (continued)

Profile of Leavers

	Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Grad Preps	Prof'l Upgrade	Non-Degree	Short-Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
Financial Issues								
Applied for gov't assistance (%)	34.3	34.7			19.7	23.4	31.0	29.9
Awarded gov't assistance (%)	38.0	38.4			22.0	22.9	34.1	32.9
Primary source of funding (%)								
employment	33.0	24.5			37.8	27.7	28.9	30.4
parents/relatives	26.2	36.8			17.6	29.8	29.2	27.7
student loan	18.8	17.5			10.5	12.8	17.6	16.6
savings	7.5	8.5			13.3	11.7	9.8	10.0
other	14.5	12.7			20.8	18.0	14.5	15.3
Perceptions and Satisfaction								
First month at university (%)								
positive	70.2	55.2			70.5	31.4	63.4	63.7
negative	10.5	15.6			5.9	10.1	12.6	11.5
neither	19.3	29.2			23.6	58.5	24.0	24.8
Top positive aspects of 1st month (%)								
culture/ambience of university	12.6	17.7			10.3	11.0	12.4	12.4
meeting people	6.9	6.8				6.8	8.5	7.5
newness/excitement	6.6	7.1				6.8	7.0	6.3
courses (general)					7.6		6.4	6.3
facilities/campus	5.6	8.1			5.7		5.8	5.9
professors (quality)	5.4				10.7	11.0		5.7
professors (general/unspecified)		7.7			6.3	6.8		5.1
Top negative aspects of 1st month (%)								
loneliness/isolation	7.1				6.6	8.3	10.9	9.5
culture/ambience of university		12.3					8.3	7.8
culture shock	9.7						6.8	6.8
class sizes		6.2			4.9		5.2	5.0
transition from secondary school	6.2	6.2						4.8
facilities/campus							4.7	4.3
large size of institution	8.0							3.9
approachability of professors	8.0							3.9
course unavailability		6.2			4.9			3.0
professors (quality)		4.9			4.9			2.2
information flows						8.3		1.7
professors (general/unspecified)					4.9			1.5
distance education courses						8.3		1.1
Able to register in desired program (%)	85.4	79.5			81.7	76.6	81.9	82.0
Registered in all/most of desired courses during last session (%)	73.2	66.5			80.6	53.2	72.2	72.5
Satisfaction with credit transfer("yes" %)	77.8	74.0			75.9	66.6	72.9	74.0
Satisfaction ("very satisfied" %)								
professor availability outside class	28.9	17.0			38.4	small	23.1	25.2
quality of instruction	28.4	22.4			40.5	sample	24.0	26.6
fairness of grading practices	37.5	25.7			49.0	size; large	35.4	36.3
university library	45.6	33.5			29.1	number of	39.6	37.7
computing labs	21.5	20.5			17.2	"not appl"	19.8	19.4
science labs	13.6	12.5			7.6	responses	11.7	11.2
Used services prior to departure (%)								
academic advising	43.8	33.5			17.1	23.9	35.8	33.7
personal counselling	16.3	16.5			7.1	8.0	12.9	12.7
study skills counselling	9.0	13.2			7.2	2.1	10.3	9.6
advice from others	40.1	50.9			23.7	40.4	49.3	44.2

Table 2 (continued)

Profile of Leavers

	Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Grad Preps	Prof'l Upgrade	Non-Degree	Short-Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
Perception of university at departure (%)								
very positive	23.0	13.9			30.2	11.2	15.2	18.2
positive	56.2	55.0			54.0	53.2	53.4	54.0
negative	14.4	19.1			9.3	11.2	21.0	18.0
very negative	3.1	5.4			2.2	4.3	6.6	5.3
Top things university could have done (%)								
improve course availability	4.3	6.4			7.2	11.4	5.6	5.8
improve course scheduling	6.3				8.8		4.7	5.2
improve program content		8.2			10.8	4.3	4.7	5.1
better access to academic advising	5.1	5.3						3.7
better academic advising quality							4.0	3.5
more personalized services		5.8					3.4	3.3
better distance education program	5.1					5.7		3.1
improve professor quality					4.0			2.3
better course variety					6.0			2.0
more personal counselling		4.7						1.9
more flexibility re. special needs	4.3							1.6
info. on (re)registration procedures						4.3		0.7
info. on academic leaves						4.3		0.6
Study Behaviour								
Attended single session (%)	20.0	38.0	27.0	26.3	56.6	90.9	28.3	33.6
Months attended total (%)								
four	18.4	26.8			37.4	5.8	26.2	26.5
eight	52.5	40.1			23.9	1.8	49.3	38.6
other	29.1	33.1			38.7	92.4	24.5	34.9
Attended multiple sessions (%)	80.0	62.0	73.0	73.7	43.4	9.1	71.7	66.4
Months attended last session (%)								
four	71.6	77.6			65.8	33.3	69.1	69.7
eight	2.4	2.3			3.8	5.6	2.3	2.5
other	26.0	20.1			30.4	61.1	28.6	27.8
Cumulative GPA (%)								
A	7.7	3.8	58.5	40.0	26.0	1.3	9.0	12.7
B	31.2	29.2	30.5	50.0	35.5	2.6	32.8	32.6
C	37.7	28.2	6.1	4.4	20.2	1.3	35.8	31.0
D or less	23.4	38.9	4.9	5.6	18.3	94.8	22.5	23.7
Last Session GPA (%)								
A	12.9	6.6	61.0	36.0	30.0	1.6	10.9	15.5
B	25.4	25.5	25.6	38.2	31.0	3.2	27.3	27.4
C	21.4	20.2	2.4	5.6	15.4	0.0	41.4	19.2
D or less	40.3	47.7	11.0	20.2	23.7	95.2	40.4	37.9
Likelihood of returning ("very likely" %)	100.0	15.1			8.3	0.0	0.0	16.1
Attempted/earned credits (%)								
mean total credits registererd in	41.0	31.7	26.0	24.9	16.0		35.4	30.8
mean total credits completed	34.9	25.9	24.8	24.9	14.3	see	30.5	26.6
mean last sess credits registered in	9.9	10.5	8.2	10.0	7.2	notes	10.5	9.6
mean last sess credits completed	6.8	6.9	7.5	9.8	5.9		7.5	6.9

Table 2 (continued)

Profile of Leavers

	Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Grad Preps	Prof'l Upgrade	Non-Degree	Short-Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
Reasons for Leaving								
Top individual reasons (%)								
required to withdraw	18.0	14.0			2.9		9.3	9.7
financial (ran out of money)	9.2	6.9			4.5	4.2	8.3	7.7
transfer to other bacc. Program		12.6			6.8	13.2	6.7	7.0
personal (unspecified/other)	9.2	4.9			4.9	3.8	6.4	6.4
illness	9.3	3.3				8.5	4.8	4.9
found employment	7.3				2.8	4.2	4.3	4.4
met original goal(s)					23.1			3.7
life/personal changes	6.2							3.6
job/study conflict	4.9	2.8			3.9	5.6		3.6
changes in personal circumstances						4.2	3.5	3.6
program unavailability		4.3			5.3		3.4	3.3
course unavailability	2.3	4.3			3.3			3.1
didn't like program							4.0	3.0
lack of motivation	2.8	2.8					3.3	3.0
relocation					3.6			2.6
travel	3.1							1.5
loneliness/isolation		3.1				3.8		1.5
complaints about university						2.8		1.1
never really attended						19.7		1.9
Clusters of reasons (%)								
program/curriculum	5.3	15.5			11.9	13.2	16.1	14.9
economic/financial	10.9	9.0			6.4	7.6	10.0	10.1
job/career	14.5	8.5			10.3	16.7	10.0	11.4
transfer	0.9	4.4			2.1	3.5	9.5	2.2
services	0.6	0.7			0.3	2.1	0.8	0.9
faculty	0.5	2.3			1.8	2.8	2.3	2.1
courses	4.6	8.5			7.1	4.2	6.5	6.6
university	1.3	2.5			3.0	5.6	3.8	3.4
academic performance	21.8	19.9			5.2	2.1	11.2	13.0
personal	38.8	28.4			51.3	38.9	27.6	34.4
other	0.8	0.3			1.3	3.5	2.2	1.9
Response to forced choice (%)								
left due to poor grades	33.5	33.0			9.3	4.8	30.3	27.1
left due to financial difficulties	28.2	28.8			14.5	14.4	27.3	25.3
family/personal circumstances	52.2	42.0			29.8	48.4	46.0	44.4
left because found job	21.8	22.4			14.3	12.2	19.8	19.2
left because unsuited to university	8.6	43.2			24.6	28.2	40.0	33.3
left because no student loan award	5.7	7.7			4.1	7.1	5.5	5.5
Originally planned to transfer	0.0	100.0			30.9	0.0	0.0	11.7
Required to withdraw (%)	30.3	28.5			8.2	1.1	20.0	19.8
Activities/Experiences Since Departure								
Attended institution since departure (%)	48.2	71.0			54.8	69.7	60.1	58.8
hiatus from departure to re-entry (%)								
3 months or less	23.4	31.2			29.9	57.3	19.9	24.1
4 - 6 months	44.7	37.6			38.6	11.4	42.5	40.5
7 - 12 months	20.7	20.9			18.8	19.8	24.3	22.8
13 or more months	11.2	10.3			12.7	11.5	13.3	12.6
transfer to same program (%)	41.6	39.9			34.2	50.4	33.0	35.4

Table 2 (continued)

Profile of Leavers

	Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Grad Preps	Prof'l Upgrade	Non-Degree	Short-Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
institution type attended (%)								
BC college	76.4	52.5			49.3	26.7	59.2	56.0
BC university	8.3	27.2			29.7	43.5	16.5	19.3
other Canadian post-secondary	10.1	15.0			15.4	24.4	19.4	17.6
other/unknown	5.2	5.3			5.6	5.4	4.9	5.1
Main activity first 3 months (%)								
work full-time	56.2	47.9			58.6	38.3	58.3	56.6
work part-time	9.3	12.5			9.3	6.9	10.4	10.1
seek work	3.0	3.1			2.3	2.1	4.8	4.0
attend school	7.9	19.8			12.8	38.8	8.8	11.0
other	23.6	16.7			17.0	13.9	17.7	18.3
Main activity now (%)								
work full-time	42.9	29.2			47.9	30.3	40.2	40.6
work part-time	7.6	5.7			5.5	1.1	5.1	5.4
seek work	2.5	2.6			2.3	2.1	2.6	2.5
attend school	33.8	54.5			35.3	59.6	43.1	42.1
other	13.2	8.0			9.0	6.9	9.0	9.4
Occupation code (for those working) (%)								
management	9.7	6.2			5.2	8.8	7.8	7.6
professional	21.7	20.0			46.1	36.8	22.3	26.3
skilled technical	28.9	31.7			22.2	28.1	29.4	28.3
intermediate technical	30.4	31.7			20.3	19.3	32.9	30.1
labour elemental	9.2	10.3			6.1	7.0	7.5	7.7
Mean annual salary (for those working)	$34,150	$28,600			$38,100	$43,500	$34,000	$34,600
Impacts of University								
Attended long enough to feel impacts (%)	78.0	68.6			60.3	27.7	78.4	73.4
Top impacts (%)								
moderate academic benefit	10.3	6.5			10.3	5.8	9.5	9.5
developed friendships	7.9	5.6			6.3		7.2	7.1
discovered not suited to university		7.1				17.3	6.8	5.8
developed academic self-discipline	7.8	7.6					4.9	5.2
better understanding of university	4.3	5.6			6.2	9.6	4.7	4.9
specific academic accomplishment					4.6			2.7
frustration about university						7.7		2.5
university as "liberating"					5.0			2.4
appreciation for lifelong learning	5.0					5.8		2.1
Clusters of responses (%)								
academic development	37.3	29.7			35.0	25.5	29.4	31.2
social development	34.0	35.3			28.5	39.2	36.5	35.3
knowledge of university	10.3	12.6			14.9	19.6	13.4	13.1
job related benefits	7.8	7.9			8.1	2.0	6.9	7.2
assessments of university attended	8.2	12.1			11.3	11.8	9.5	9.9
other	2.4	2.4			2.2	2.0	3.9	3.9
Response to forced choice (%)								
great extent role (personal growth)	38.0	26.5			28.2	19.2	30.2	30.7
some extent role (personal growth)	45.6	45.7			47.7	38.5	46.4	46.3
great extent role (academic dev't)	34.3	23.0			28.6	9.6	19.5	22.6
some extent role (academic dev't)	44.9	42.6			41.6	25.0	42.3	42.4

Table 2 (continued)

Profile of Leavers

	Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Grad Preps	Prof'l Upgrade	Non-Degree	Short-Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
Reasons for Leaving								
Top individual reasons (%)								
required to withdraw	18.0	14.0			2.9		9.3	9.7
financial (ran out of money)	9.2	6.9			4.5	4.2	8.3	7.7
transfer to other bacc. Program		12.6			6.8	13.2	6.7	7.0
personal (unspecified/other)	9.2	4.9			4.9	3.8	6.4	6.4
illness	9.3	3.3				8.5	4.8	4.9
found employment	7.3				2.8	4.2	4.3	4.4
met original goal(s)					23.1			3.7
life/personal changes	6.2							3.6
job/study conflict	4.9	2.8			3.9	5.6		3.6
changes in personal circumstances						4.2	3.5	3.6
program unavailability		4.3			5.3		3.4	3.3
course unavailability	2.3	4.3			3.3			3.1
didn't like program							4.0	3.0
lack of motivation	2.8	2.8					3.3	3.0
relocation					3.6			2.5
travel	3.1							1.5
loneliness/isolation		3.1				3.8		1.5
complaints about university						2.8		1.1
never really attended						19.7		1.0
Clusters of reasons (%)								
program/curriculum	5.3	15.5			11.9	13.2	16.1	14.9
economic/financial	10.9	9.0			6.4	7.6	10.0	10.1
job/career	14.5	8.5			10.3	16.7	10.0	11.4
transfer	0.9	4.4			2.1	3.5	9.5	2.2
services	0.6	0.7			0.3	2.1	0.8	0.9
faculty	0.5	2.3			1.8	2.8	2.3	2.1
courses	4.6	6.5			7.1	4.2	6.5	6.6
university	1.3	2.5			3.0	5.6	3.8	3.4
academic performance	21.8	19.9			5.2	2.1	11.2	13.0
personal	38.8	28.4			51.3	38.9	27.6	34.4
other	0.8	0.3			1.3	3.5	2.2	1.0
Response to forced choice (%)								
left due to poor grades	33.5	33.0			9.3	4.8	30.3	27.1
left due to financial difficulties	28.2	28.8			14.5	14.4	27.3	25.3
family/personal circumstances	52.2	42.0			29.8	48.4	46.0	44.4
left because found job	21.8	22.4			14.3	12.2	19.8	19.2
left because unsuited to university	8.6	43.2			24.6	28.2	40.0	33.3
left because no student loan award	5.7	7.7			4.1	7.1	5.5	5.5
Originally planned to transfer	0.0	100.0			30.9	0.0	0.0	11.7
Required to withdraw (%)	30.3	28.5			8.2	1.1	20.0	19.8
Activities/Experiences Since Departure								
Attended institution since departure (%)	48.2	71.0			54.8	69.7	60.1	58.8
hiatus from departure to re-entry (%)								
3 months or less	23.4	31.2			29.9	57.3	19.9	24.1
4 - 6 months	44.7	37.6			38.6	11.4	42.5	40.5
7 - 12 months	20.7	20.9			18.8	19.8	24.3	22.8
13 or more months	11.2	10.3			12.7	11.5	13.3	12.6
transfer to same program (%)	41.6	39.9			34.2	50.4	33.0	35.4

Table 2 (continued)

Profile of Leavers

	Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Grad Preps	Prof'l Upgrade	Non-Degree	Short-Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
institution type attended (%)								
BC college	76.4	52.5			49.3	26.7	59.2	58.0
BC university	8.3	27.2			29.7	43.5	16.5	19.3
other Canadian post-secondary	10.1	15.0			15.4	24.4	19.4	17.6
other/unknown	5.2	5.3			5.6	5.4	4.9	5.1
Main activity first 3 months (%)								
work full-time	56.2	47.9			58.6	38.3	58.3	56.6
work part-time	9.3	12.5			9.3	6.9	10.4	10.1
seek work	3.0	3.1			2.3	2.1	4.8	4.0
attend school	7.9	19.8			12.8	38.8	8.8	11.0
other	23.6	16.7			17.0	13.9	17.7	18.3
Main activity now (%)								
work full-time	42.9	29.2			47.9	30.3	40.2	40.6
work part-time	7.6	5.7			5.5	1.1	5.1	5.4
seek work	2.5	2.6			2.3	2.1	2.6	2.5
attend school	33.8	54.5			35.3	59.6	43.1	42.1
other	13.2	8.0			9.0	6.9	9.0	9.4
Occupation code (for those working) (%)								
management	9.7	6.2			5.2	8.8	7.8	7.6
professional	21.7	20.0			46.1	36.8	22.3	26.3
skilled technical	28.9	31.7			22.2	28.1	29.4	28.3
intermediate technical	30.4	31.7			20.3	19.3	32.9	30.1
labour elemental	9.2	10.3			6.1	7.0	7.5	7.7
Mean annual salary (for those working)	$34,150	$28,600			$38,100	$43,500	$34,000	$34,600
Impacts of University								
Attended long enough to feel impacts (%)	78.0	68.6			60.3	27.7	78.4	73.4
Top impacts (%)								
moderate academic benefit	10.3	6.5			10.3	5.8	9.5	9.5
developed friendships	7.9	5.6			6.3		7.2	7.1
discovered not suited to university		7.1				17.3	6.8	5.8
developed academic self-discipline	7.8	7.6					4.9	5.2
better understanding of university	4.3	5.6			6.2	9.6	4.7	4.9
specific academic accomplishment					4.6			2.7
frustration about university						7.7		2.5
university as "liberating"					5.0			2.4
appreciation for lifelong learning	5.0					5.8		2.1
Clusters of responses (%)								
academic development	37.3	29.7			35.0	25.5	29.4	31.2
social development	34.0	35.3			28.5	39.2	36.5	35.3
knowledge of university	10.3	12.6			14.9	19.6	13.4	13.1
job related benefits	7.8	7.9			8.1	2.0	6.9	7.2
assessments of university attended	8.2	12.1			11.3	11.8	9.5	9.9
other	2.4	2.4			2.2	2.0	3.9	3.3
Response to forced choice (%)								
great extent role (personal growth)	38.0	26.5			28.2	19.2	30.2	30.7
some extent role (personal growth)	45.6	45.7			47.7	38.5	46.4	46.3
great extent role (academic dev't)	34.3	23.0			28.6	9.6	19.5	22.8
some extent role (academic dev't)	44.9	42.6			41.6	25.0	42.3	42.4

Stopouts

Table 2 provides an overview of stopouts in relation to the overall sample of leavers, of which it comprises about 13%. In summary:

- In demographic terms, stopouts are similar to leavers overall. Fifty-four percent of stopouts are women, slightly less than one-fourth are members of a visible minority, and they average 26 years of age at the time of the survey.

- The application and admission behaviour of stopouts is different from the total sample in several key respects. A higher percentage of stopouts reported that the university from which they had departed was their first-choice institution (85% vs. 74% for leavers overall). By definition, all stopouts began university with the intention of earning a degree (vs. 84% for the sample overall). Their reasons for attending university are generally similar to those of the overall sample, though "program quality" and "program availability" issues appear to play a slightly larger role for stopouts. Stopouts report slightly lower admission averages (35% with "A" as opposed to 46% for the total sample). In terms of admission transfer credits and initial living arrangements, stopouts are quite similar to the overall sample.

- Stopouts are slightly more likely than the overall sample to rely on employment income and student loans for financial support.

- Eighty percent of stopouts attended more than one academic session before commencing their current study hiatus. This compares with 66% for the overall sample. Similarly, stopouts reported completing (on average) 35 of the 41 credits they attempted at university (compared with the total sample, who completed 27 of 31 attempted credits). Generally speaking, the academic performance of stopouts is somewhat lower than that of the overall sample. In the last session attended, a slightly lower percentage of stopouts received "A" grades and a slightly higher percentage "C" or "D" grades" than the total sample of leavers.

- Stopouts are more likely to report leaving for reasons related to academic performance (including "required to withdraw" status), personal factors (including lack of financial resources), and job/career factors; and are less likely to attribute their departure to program/curriculum issues. The low percentage of stopouts reporting that they left because they were unsuited to university (9% vs. 33% for the entire sample), their intention to return despite a higher rate of academic difficulties, and the higher incidence of reported illness and life/personal changes all suggest interactions between academic performance and other (personal) factors. These interactions are evident in many of the verbal responses (see page 44).

- For the most part, stopouts are more positive than the total sample about their university experience. A slightly higher percentage of stopouts reported that their first month at university was positive (70% vs. 64%) and they assigned slightly higher satisfaction ratings to professor availability, the quality of the library, and other factors. Similarly, a slightly higher percentage (79% vs. 72%) indicated that their perception of university at the time of their departure was "positive" or "very positive". In terms of satisfaction with course and program availability and transfer credits awarded, the perceptions of stopouts were similar to those of the total sample.

- Stopouts were slightly more likely to have used academic advising prior to departure (44% vs. 34%), but this is likely a reflection of the fact that their university experience was longer than that of the total sample.

- Where negative perceptions of the first month existed, they appeared to revolve around "culture shock", "the size of the institution", and "the approachability of professors". As with the total sample, there is very little clustering of opinion concerning actions the university might have taken at the time of their departure.

- Forty-eight percent of stopouts had attended another institution since discontinuing their studies at their "home" university. This is a lower proportion than for the leaver sample overall (59%). Three-quarters of those who did attend another institution selected a BC college (58% for the entire sample), and 42% registered in the same program (35% for the entire sample).

- In the three months immediately following their departure, 56% of stopouts worked full-time while 8% attended school. At the time of the survey, 43% were working full-time while 34% attended school. For a significant minority of stopouts, then, the factors that contributed to departure from university have not prevented subsequent enrolment elsewhere; and there exists a clear expectation that these factors will not prevent a return to university in the future.

- Of those stopout students who are currently employed, occupational categories and annualized salaries are similar to those of the overall sample.

- The majority of stopouts (78%) stated that they had attended university long enough to have felt the impacts. Reported specific impacts included some/moderate academic benefit (10%), development of friendships (8%), academic self-discipline (8%), an appreciation for life-long learning (5%) and a better understanding of university (4%). Eighty-four percent stated that university had contributed to their personal growth to a great extent (38%) or to some extent (46%); 79% indicated that university had contributed to their academic development to a great extent (34%) or to some extent (45%).

Pre-Planned Transfers

Table 2 describes pre-planned transfer students in relation to the total sample. Pre-planned transfers constitute about 7% of the total sample.

- The demographic characteristics of pre-planned transfers are different from those of the total sample in two key respects. Thirty-four percent are members of a visible minority (vs. 21% for the total sample) and they are younger on average (23 vs. 26 years of age).

- The application and admission characteristics of pre-planned transfers reflect their status as young, relatively mobile degree-seeking students, a large proportion of whom entered university directly from secondary school. Compared to the total sample, a greater proportion of pre-planned transfer students apply to other institutions (63% vs. 50%), a smaller percentage enrolled in their first choice institution (58% vs. 74%), their primary goal on entering university was to earn a degree or other credential (77% vs. 71%), and a higher percentage applied directly from secondary school (64% vs. 51%). Pre-planned transfer students were more likely than the total sample to have selected their university because it was close to family or was less expensive; they were less likely to have selected their university because of program quality or availability. Their admission grades were generally similar to those of the total sample.

- Pre-planned transfers rely to a greater than average extent on parents or relatives for their primary source of funding (37% vs. 28% for the entire sample) and to a lower extent on employment income (25% vs. 30%). They are more likely than average (and more likely than all other leaver groups) to have been awarded government financial assistance; in combination with their application behaviour and institutional preferences, this reinforces the suggestion that at least some pre-planned transfers attended their "home" university only until they could afford to transfer elsewhere.

- Pre-planned transfer students attended university for a relatively short period of time: 38% attended for only one session (compared to 34% for the entire sample, 91% for "short-stay registrants", and 57% for "other non-degree registrants"). In terms of both their cumulative university GPA and their last university session GPA, pre-planned transfer students performed less well than the average (for example, 39% earned a cumulative GPA of "D" or less, compared with 24% for the entire sample). Pre-planned transfers earned an average 26 credits of the 32 attempted, in total, which is almost identical to that of the entire sample. Given the difference in single session attendance, the results suggest that pre-planned transfer students register, on average, in more courses per session than the total sample.

- Relative to other groups of leavers, pre-planned transfers are more likely to depart because of their academic performance (including a requirement that they withdraw), because they transferred to another institution, or because they concluded they were

unsuited to university. They were correspondingly less likely to cite personal factors in their decision.

- Students who initially planned to transfer to another institution are somewhat less positive about their university experience than other groups. Only 55% stated that their first month at university was positive (compared to 64% for the total sample). The most positive aspects of the first month were identified as university culture/ambience (18%), the campus and facilities (8%), professors (8%), newness/excitement (7%), and meeting new people (7%). Culture/ambience also rated as the top negative aspect of the first month (12%), followed by class sizes, course unavailability and the transition from secondary school (all at 6%). Pre-planned transfer students also rated professor availability outside class, the quality of instruction, the fairness of grading practices and the university library lower than other leavers. Perceptions toward course and program availability and credit transfer success were roughly similar to that of the entire sample. As might be expected, their overall perception of their university at the time of their departure is less positive than that of other groups. They suggested their university should improve program content, improve course availability, and provide more personalized service to students. These satisfaction ratings are all consistent with the notion that many of these pre-planned transfer students would have preferred to attend elsewhere.

- Most (71%) pre-planned transfer students did, in fact, fulfill their intention to attend another institution after leaving university (compared to 59% for the entire sample). However, their destinations (53% to BC colleges, 27% to another BC university); the fact that only 40% transferred to the same program; and the relatively high importance of poor academic performance, financial difficulties, family/personal circumstances and their self-assessed unsuitability to university all suggest that the transfer may not have occurred exactly as originally intended. Nonetheless, transfer activity for this group of leavers was more rapid than for the total sample (with 20% vs. 11% transferring within the first three months of departure).

- Pre-planned transfer students report impacts from attending university that are generally comparable to leavers overall. There exists wide variation in the specific impacts identified, with no single specific impact accounting for more than 8% of total responses.

Students Preparing for Graduate Programs

A small proportion (2%) of leavers self-identified as preparing for a graduate program of study, and hence, of having no undergraduate degree completion objectives. With the exception of "designated group" survey responses provided by the respondents, only student records system information is available for this group.

- Demographically, students preparing for graduate programs were similar to the total sample in all respects except their age. Over half were 30 or more, and their mean age of almost 34 is fully 8 years greater than that of the total sample. It seems reasonable to suggest that a significant proportion of students preparing for graduate programs earned a baccalaureate credential some years ago, and that their return to university has occurred after a considerable hiatus.

- The previous academic performance of these students is higher than for the overall sample. Almost 60% claimed to have earned admission GPAs of "A." Their stay at university was, on average, similar to the remainder of the sample, with 73% enrolled for two or more sessions (vs. 66% for the remainder).

- The vast majority of students preparing for graduate programs appear to have achieved considerable academic success at university. Almost 90% achieved cumulative GPAs of "A" (59%) or "B" (31%), compared to 45% for leavers overall. A small proportion (11%) did report grades of "C" or lower; such grades would generally be unacceptable for admission to a graduate program.

Students Pursuing Professional Upgrade Studies

Slightly less than 2% of the total sample reported pursuing non-degree professionally oriented studies; as with the previous group, only student records system information is available since the survey (except for "designated group" questions) was not administered. The key patterns based on student records system data are:

- Professional upgrade students are significantly older than leavers in the other groups. Two thirds are age 30 or more, and the average age is 36—10 years greater than that of the total sample. In addition, more than three-quarters were women, compared to 57% for the total sample. This gender mix reflects, in part, the role of post-degree and in-service programs for nurses and teachers, the majority of whom are women.

- Most professional upgrade students were admitted on the basis of "non-traditional" academic criteria that would include mature student status and special admission criteria rather than on the basis of their formal secondary or post-secondary transcripts. Nonetheless, they report admission grades comparable to those in the entire sample.

- Their stay at university was slightly longer than the average, with 74% enrolled for 2 or more sessions (vs. 66% overall).

- Their academic performance at university was also higher than the average, and comparable to that of students preparing for graduate programs. Ninety percent earned grades of "A" or "B."

Students Pursuing Other Non-Degree Studies

Fourteen percent of the total sample was comprised of students pursuing other forms of non-degree study (i.e. not graduate program preparation and not professional upgrading). An overview of the survey findings for this group follows:

- Non-degree students were slightly older than the average (30 vs. 26 years of age) and slightly more likely to be women (63% vs. 57%) and of First Nations origin (11% vs. 5%).

- Application and admission patterns suggest non-degree students are relatively place-bound. Far fewer applied to other institutions than in the total sample (36% vs. 50%), far fewer indicated the university was their first choice institution (49% vs. 74%), and a relatively greater percentage stated that they attended the university they did because it was close to family or because of its geographical location.

- As expected, their primary goal when first enrolling was to take courses (53%) and to learn or acquire an education (22%) rather than to earn a credential (11%) or degree (0%).

- Relatively fewer non-degree students were admitted on the basis of their secondary or college transcripts; almost 40% were admitted in "other" admission categories. They report higher than average admission GPAs, with 57% reporting "A" admission grades compared to only 46% for the entire sample.

- A lower proportion of non-degree leavers (20% vs. 30% for the entire sample) applied for government financial assistance, and a correspondingly higher proportion reported that employment income provided the primary source of their funding.

- Demographic and admission characteristics in combination present a general picture of mid-career and mid-life students returning to their local (or most convenient) university in order to complete specific courses, which they have a greater tendency to fund through their own income.

- Within this context, non-degree leavers are more likely to register for a single session (57% vs. 34% overall) and to report grades at university somewhat higher than those of the entire leaver sample. A small proportion (8% – initially classified as stopouts but reclassified because of their non-degree orientation) consider it "very likely" that they will re-register at university within the next 12 months. Prior to departure, non-degree students earned an average 14.3 credits (or about one-half year of full-time equivalent study) compared to 26.6 credits for the sample overall.

- Not unexpectedly, non-degree students cite as their primary specific reason for leaving (23%) that they had met their original goals in attending university. This pattern is also evident when specific responses are grouped into clusters: personal factors accounted for

51% of all responses. And responses to the forced choice questions on reasons for departure are dominated by family/personal circumstances (30%) and perceived unsuitability to university (25%). Non-degree students identify academic performance or poor grades as a reason for departure in far fewer cases than the overall sample.

- Almost one-third of non-degree respondents indicated an original intention to transfer to another institution. Given their non-degree orientation, this suggests a sizeable group of older students who "shop" for courses as and when required.

- In terms of their perceptions toward and satisfaction with their university experience, non-degree leavers have opinions that are generally comparable to those of the other leaver groups. They seem even more satisfied than the average with respect to professors and instruction, grading and course availability. Overall, 30% held "very positive" perceptions toward the university at time of departure, compared to 18% for the sample overall.

- The credential orientation, relatively short stay and planned pre-degree departure of these non-degree students would appear to explain lower levels of service usage: use of academic advising, personal counseling, and seeking advice from others occurred with only about half the frequency as with other leaver groups.

- Over half of non-degree leavers have subsequently attended another institution. About one-third transferred to the same program. Compared to other leavers, they were more likely to attend a BC university (30% vs. 19%) than a BC college (49% vs. 58%). About one-third are currently attending school, compared to 42% overall.

- A higher proportion of non-degree leavers are currently working (48% vs. 41%), and a higher proportion of these are employed in professional occupations (46% vs. 26%), earning slightly higher than average annual salaries ($38,100 vs. $34,600).

- Fewer non-degree students (60% vs. 73%) stated they had attended university long enough to have been impacted. Their assessment of the impacts of attending is, however, similar to that of other learners.

Short-Stay Registrants

Short stay registrants constitute 3% of the total leaver sample. As indicated above, the inclusion or exclusion of short stay registrants in the sample was affected by individual university record-keeping practices and respondent self-selection. To this extent, the responses in this section reflect the views of only a portion of short stay students and should be interpreted with caution.

Despite these qualifiers, a few key response patterns are evident in the data:

- Short stay students rated the university they attended as their first choice with much lower than average frequency (37% vs. 74%).

- Short stay students appear to be more degree focused. Eight-eight percent were sure of their major when first enrolling (vs. 76%), and 84% stated that their goal on first enrolling was to earn a degree or credential (vs. 71%).

- A higher percentage (23% vs. 12%) previously attended non-BC post-secondary institutions (i.e. out of province, out of country) and claim to have earned relatively high grades there (with 73% reporting "A" admission averages).

- Ninety-one percent reported attending only one session of study; most of these indicated they had attended for two months or less. (As noted above, some stated they had never really attended classes at all.) Overwhelmingly, these students achieved low grades: about 95% reported earning a "D" or less at university. Based on their self-reported study behaviour and on student record system information, their low grades reflect a tendency to not attend or complete courses because of departure, rather than unsuccessfully attempting to complete the coursework.

- Four specific reasons for departure account for about one-half of all responses of short stay registrants: never having actually attended (20%), transferring to another program (13%), illness (9%), and a job/study conflict (6%). In the first instance, it is reasonable to suggest that these students should, in future studies, be excluded from sample. In the second, registration at two institutions, and the subsequent withdrawal from one to attend elsewhere is suggested by the relatively short hiatus between leaving university and registering elsewhere. Both illness and job/study conflicts suggest unforeseen problems that, because of their timing, may have resulted in the student leaving but not notifying the institution and thus remaining on the system as an active student.

- Though most students received low grades (95% achieved "D" or failing grades) only a small proportion (5%) left <u>because</u> of their grades. This suggests that low grades were the effect, rather than the cause of withdrawal.

- The majority (59%) of short stay registrants reported neither a positive nor a negative first month at university. However, among those with an opinion, positive perceptions outnumbered negative perceptions by a ratio of about 3 to 1.

- Though the small subsample size makes it difficult to demonstrate statistically, it appears that short stay registrants are less positive than other leavers with respect to program availability, course availability and transfer credits awarded; it also seems (as a function of their short stay) that the frequency of service usage was lower.

- Seventy percent of short stay registrants have subsequently attended another institution and have transferred to the same program and within the university sector to a higher degree than other leavers (which also provides support for the dual registration hypothesis).

- Almost 28% report having been impacted by their university experience, compared to 73% of the total sample. They also report that university played a relatively smaller role in both their personal growth and their academic development.

True Leavers

The preceding sections have examined the roughly 40% of leavers who, for various reasons, might be considered as having experienced something other than classic attrition or dropout. The remaining 60%, the "true leavers" in the sample, were subjected to considerably more detailed analysis, as discussed below. Summary information on true leavers is provided in Table 2 (pages 19–23), while tables 3 through 7 (pages 39–43) present detailed descriptions of specific issues.

Demographic Characteristics

- Fifty-six percent of the true leaver group were women, a percentage that closely approximates the gender mix in the undergraduate population overall.

- In terms of age, true leavers present a more balanced age distribution than, for example, short stay registrations (dominated by younger students) or pre-graduate program and professional upgrade students (who tend to be older). The age diversity of true leavers prohibits any simple explanation of attrition based on age or level of experience.

Application and Admission Issues

- Though about half of true leavers applied to other post-secondary institutions, the majority reported that the university they attended was in fact their first-choice institution. Three-fourths were sure of their academic major when they first enrolled, and by definition, all intended to earn a degree (or, in the small minority of cases, stated they were not certain of their degree plans).

- Program availability, geographic location, program quality and proximity to family were the main factors in the selection of the university. In this respect, they are most unlike stopouts (for whom program quality was considerably more important), non-degree students (who were much less concerned with program quality), and pre-planned transfers (for whom program availability was much less important).

- True leavers conform more closely than several of the other leaver groups to the conventional BC secondary (49%) and BC college (26%) admission classes. In particular, the admission class of true leavers distinguishes them most clearly from students preparing for graduate programs, students pursuing professional upgrading, and other non-degree students.

- About 85% earned admission GPAs of either "A" (45%) or "B" (40%). This places them in the middle of all leaver groups: "A" admission GPAs were earned by as few as 35% of stopouts and as many as 73% of short stay registrants and 57% of non-degree students.

- Thirty-eight percent of true leavers transferred credits to university.

- Demographic and application/admission characteristics of true leavers match those of the overall student body in BC universities in terms of age, gender, application behaviour, admission class, admission GPA and desire to transfer credits. There is little or no evidence of attrition predisposition in terms of these demographic and application/admission characteristics.

Financial Issues

- Almost one-third of true leavers applied for government financial assistance. Most relied primarily on their parents or relatives and on their own employment income for support; student loans were the primary funding source for only 18%. As with other groups, the failure to receive a student loan was a factor in the departure of only a very small minority (5%).

Study Behaviour

- Twenty-eight percent of true leavers attended one academic session or less; 72% attended two or more sessions. On departure, they had completed an average of 30.5 credits or one year of full-time equivalent study.

- The cumulative GPA earned by true leavers suggests that serious academic problems (i.e., averages of "D" or less) were experienced by 23%. The final session GPA indicates more serious problems (with 40% earning "D" or less). The amount of time students reported attending during their final session (only 2% for the full eight months and 69% for four months) suggests their grades may sometimes have resulted from their failure to attend class, rather than their unsuccessful attempt to actually complete their courses.

Reasons for Leaving

- Table 3 provides a detailed presentation of the verbal responses to the question "What was your main reason for leaving university?" as post-coded into the 86 categories developed based on an analysis of the responses.

- The most frequently mentioned specific reasons for departure were

  - Required to withdraw (9%)
  - Shortage of financial resources (8%)

- Transfer to another baccalaureate program (7%)
- Unspecified or unclassified personal reasons (6%)
- Illness/health/injury (5%)

- Responses to the forced choice questions about reasons for departure reinforce the pattern above, in that they were dominated by family/personal circumstances and perceived unsuitability to university (which presumably correlated with poor academic performance and the subsequent decision to depart or transfer).

- A more detailed perspective on the reasons for departure can be obtained from examining specific responses within each of the major clusters. For example, the largest cluster of responses—personal circumstances—incorporates a wide variety of specific factors including illness, family/marital commitments, lack of motivation, self-assessed unsuitability for university, and relocation. The second largest cluster—program and curriculum—includes such responses as dislike of the program, unavailability of the program, etc.

- Despite the very wide range of specific responses regarding reasons for departure, a few general patterns emerge.

  - The first is that stated responses can be sorted—if somewhat simplistically—into several categories on the basis of potential policy/management/service interventions. Unexpected intervening circumstances (e.g. illness) for example, may point to the possibility of emergency support or accommodation services. Other reasons (for example dissatisfaction with course availability) suggest the possible need for better course demand projections.

  - The second is that some responses appear intrinsic to the student (e.g. relocation, achieving their study goal), others relate to the university and/or to the relationship between the university and the student (job/study conflicts), while others are external to both the student and the university (financial aid problems). The policy and service implications of these differences will be discussed in the conclusions below.

  - The third (which is not apparent in the table but was uncovered during the analysis) is the interactions between reasons when students provide multiple reasons for departure (as about half did). For example two students might both cite financial difficulties as the reason for departure. One might have responded by obtaining work and suffering lower grades due to job/study conflicts, while the other might have decided to transfer to a lower cost institution before his/her grades were affected. The first student's academic record would likely show poor grades or even a requirement to withdraw, even though the student reasonably defined the problem as financial rather than academic. Many such interactions exist in the multiple response data; once again, however, there is very little clustering around main themes. In other words, the reasons for departure are often multi-faceted, and conventional measures (e.g., poor

academic performance) may not capture either the root causes or the interactions adequately. (See the section that presents selected responses verbatim, page 44.)

Perceptions and Satisfaction

- Among the true leaver group, positive perceptions of the first month at university outnumber negative perceptions by a ratio of 5 to 1; about one-fourth of respondents defined the first month as neither negative nor positive.

- Specific reactions to the first month—both positive and negative—vary widely. (See Tables 4 and 5.)

- In terms of positive aspects, the key specific responses were the culture/ambience of the university (12%), meeting new people (8%), feelings of newness/excitement (7%), general comments about courses (6%), and praise for the campus and/or facilities (6%).

- When grouped into broad clusters, positive reactions were dominated by social and personal benefits (45%), course related comments (14%), comments about university services and facilities (13%), and statements concerning professors or instruction (13%).

- As regards negative aspects of the first month, the most frequent specific responses were complaints about loneliness and isolation (11%), university culture and ambience (8%), culture shock (7%), class sizes (5%), and concerns over the campus or facilities (5%). When grouped into clusters, negative reactions to the first month were dominated by social or personal issues (42%), services and facilities (15%), and course-related concerns (13%).

- In other words, the aspects that some students find most positive in the first month are quite similar to those that others find most negative. The focus of the first month at university—whether positive or negative—is clearly remembered as being on socialization and adjustment rather than on academic matters.

- On other satisfaction issues, 82% of the true leavers group reported successfully registering in all or most of their desired program, 72% reported success in getting all or most of the courses they wanted, and 73% were satisfied with the transfer of credits to university. With only a few exceptions, these satisfaction ratings are reasonably consistent across all leaver groups.

- True leavers are not, generally speaking, significantly different from other groups in terms of their service usage or general perceptions of the university at departure. In the former case, with the exception of short stay registrants, there is little variation in service usage prior to departure; in the latter case, stopouts and non-degree students show higher satisfaction at departure while pre-planned transfers and short stay registrants show satisfaction levels roughly equivalent to those of true leavers.

- Course-related issues dominate true leavers' opinions about the actions the university might have taken before their departure. (See Table 6). Course availability tops the list (6%), followed by course scheduling (5%), improved program content, better quality academic advising, and more personalized services.

Activities Since Departure

- Sixty percent of true leavers have attended another educational institution subsequent to their university departure. About one-third of these registered in a similar program, and about 60% enrolled in a BC college as compared to 17% in a BC university. The hiatus between university departure and subsequent enrolment was between 4 and 6 months for 43% of leavers, which is comparable to all other leaver groups except short stay registrants (whose transition was quicker).

- More than two-thirds of true leavers made a relatively rapid (3 months or less) transition to full- or part-time employment after departing from university. At the present time, these leavers tend to be working full-time (40%), working part-time (5%), seeking work (3%), or attending school (43%). Those working are distributed relatively evenly between intermediate technical, skilled technical and professional occupations; their annualized salaries average $34,000. The proportion in management/professional occupations is comparable to pre-planned transfers and stopouts but significantly lower than for other non-degree students and short-stay registrants.

Impacts of University

- Seventy-eight percent of true leavers indicated they had attended long enough to have felt the impacts of university; this compares with 28% for short stay registrants and 78% for stopouts. Over three-fourths report that university contributed to their personal growth, either to a great extent (30%) or to some extent (46%). Similarly, 20% indicated that university had impacted their academic development to a great extent, and another 42% to some extent.

- Leavers responded to the question "What did you get from your university experience?" in several key categories. Social/personal development impacts topped the scale (37%), including such specific responses as making friends and discovering that they were not suited to university (each at 7%). Twenty-nine percent reported that they had experienced academic development of acquired skills, including general statements about learning something or a moderate amount. Thirteen percent of all responses were focused on wide ranging assessments (positive and negative) of the specific university attended. As with the other open-ended (verbal) responses, opinion covered an extremely wide variety of issues. (See Table 7.)

Table 3

Main Reason for Leaving University (True Leaver Group): 3540 respondents providing 4368 responses=99.6% response rate

Program/Curriculum Related	**16.1%**
didn't like program/not interested/poor fit	4.0
not challenging/deep/rigorous; low standards	0.3
program structure (theory vs. practice; length)	1.2
poor course choice/too many required or intro courses	0.5
problems with credit transfer	0.7
program quality	1.3
completed as much of program as desired/possible	0.1
program not available/offered; program cancelled	3.4
unable to get in/transfer to program (unspecified)	1.4
unable to get in/transfer to program (Business)	0.5
unable to get in/transfer to program (other)	0.8
repetitive of previous program/studies	0.0
excessive workload	1.9
other	0.0
Economic/Financial Related	**10.0%**
money shortage/too expensive/cost of living	8.3
poor cost-benefit ratio; uncertain downstream benefits	0.3
concern over mounting debt/don't spend until sure	0.6
student financial aid inadequate/ran out	0.1
family financial situation changed/support withdrawn	0.0
student financial aid withdrawn/ineligible	0.3
scholarship/bursary withdrawn/ineligible	0.1
other (non-family) support withdrawn/ineligible	0.0
free tuition/subsidy/waiver used up	0.0
lost job as source of education funding	0.0
other	0.3
Job/Career/Employment Related	**10.0%**
poor job prospects/program poor fit with career goals	1.1
completed/progressed on professional accreditation	0.0
conflict between job and study (workload, schedule)	3.3
got job/started own company/left to find work	4.3
other	1.3
Transfer Related	**9.5%**
transferred to other bac. program (unspecified)	5.3
transferred to other bac. program (business)	0.1
transferred to other bac. program (health, etc.)	0.4
transferred to other bac. program (science, etc.)	0.4
transferred to other bac. program (other)	0.5
transferred to/accepted into master's program	0.2
transferred to college/institute	2.3
planned to transfer from the outset	0.1
other	0.2
Faculty/Instruction Related	**2.3%**
general/unspecified dissatisfaction	0.6
quality of/commitment to teaching	0.8
personal/approachability/contact outside class	0.7
teaching assistants (all responses)	0.0
distance education/correspondence tutors	0.1
other	0.1
Services/Support Related	**0.8%**
poor distance education/correspondence setup	0.0
advising/guidance (unspecified)	0.1
advising/guidance (quality/content)	0.3
advising/guidance (access)	0.0
service dissatisfaction (unspecified)	0.1
service dissatisfaction (residences)	0.1
service dissatisfaction (facilities/campus)	0.0
service dissatisfaction (other services)	0.2
other	0.0
Course Related	**6.5%**
general/unspecified dissatisfaction	0.3
inappropriate schedule	0.1
workload too heavy/difficult	0.5
course content/focus/structure	0.7
course availability/cancellation/waiting list	3.2
course grading fairness/exams/assignments	0.4
classroom decorum/noise	0.0
class size/impersonal classes	0.5
distance education dissatisfaction	0.5
other	0.3
University Related	**3.8%**
school/department politics	0.2
size/impersonal/overwhelming	0.9
school lacked spirit/ambience/sense of community	1.1
bureaucracy/procedures/paperwork	0.5
other	1.1
Academic Performance Related	**11.2%**
general dissatisfaction with grades	1.8
failing grades/required to withdraw	9.3
other	0.1
Personal Circumstances Related	**27.8%**
university not for me/poor fit/didn't like	2.6
lack of motivation/interest/boredom	3.3
too much social activity/didn't do enough work	0.0
illness/health/injury	4.8
relocated/wanted to live in another city	2.5
marital/parental/child circumstances or commitments	3.5
not ready for university	0.6
desire for travel	1.3
missed home/family/friends/old city	1.5
didn't fit socially on campus/low integration	0.3
not suited to distance education/correspondence	0.0
achieved goal, so departed (excluding transfers)	0.8
other/unspecified	6.4
Other	**2.2%**

Table 3

Main Reason for Leaving University (True Leaver Group): 3540 respondents providing 4368 responses=99.6% response rate

Program/Curriculum Related	**16.1%**
didn't like program/not interested/poor fit	4.0
not challenging/deep/rigorous; low standards	0.3
program structure (theory vs. practice; length)	1.2
poor course choice/too many required or intro courses	0.5
problems with credit transfer	0.7
program quality	1.3
completed as much of program as desired/possible	0.1
program not available/offered; program cancelled	3.4
unable to get in/transfer to program (unspecified)	1.4
unable to get in/transfer to program (Business)	0.5
unable to get in/transfer to program (other)	0.8
repetitive of previous program/studies	0.0
excessive workload	1.9
other	0.0
Economic/Financial Related	**10.0%**
money shortage/too expensive/cost of living	8.3
poor cost-benefit ratio; uncertain downstream benefits	0.3
concern over mounting debt/don't spend until sure	0.6
student financial aid inadequate/ran out	0.1
family financial situation changed/support withdrawn	0.0
student financial aid withdrawn/ineligible	0.3
scholarship/bursary withdrawn/ineligible	0.1
other (non-family) support withdrawn/ineligible	0.0
free tuition/subsidy/waiver used up	0.0
lost job as source of education funding	0.0
other	0.3
Job/Career/Employment Related	**10.0%**
poor job prospects/program poor fit with career goals	1.1
completed/progressed on professional accreditation	0.0
conflict between job and study (workload, schedule)	3.3
got job/started own company/left to find work	4.3
other	1.3
Transfer Related	**9.5%**
transferred to other bac. program (unspecified)	5.3
transferred to other bac. program (business)	0.1
transferred to other bac. program (health, etc.)	0.4
transferred to other bac. program (science, etc.)	0.4
transferred to other bac. program (other)	0.5
transferred to/accepted into master's program	0.2
transferred to college/institute	2.3
planned to transfer from the outset	0.1
other	0.2
Faculty/Instruction Related	**2.3%**
general/unspecified dissatisfaction	0.6
quality of/commitment to teaching	0.8
personal/approachability/contact outside class	0.7
teaching assistants (all responses)	0.0
distance education/correspondence tutors	0.1
other	0.1

Services/Support Related	**0.6%**
poor distance education/correspondence setup	0.0
advising/guidance (unspecified)	0.1
advising/guidance (quality/content)	0.3
advising/guidance (access)	0.0
service dissatisfaction (unspecified)	0.1
service dissatisfaction (residences)	0.1
service dissatisfaction (facilities/campus)	0.0
service dissatisfaction (other services)	0.2
other	0.0
Course Related	**6.5%**
general/unspecified dissatisfaction	0.3
inappropriate schedule	0.1
workload too heavy/difficult	0.5
course content/focus/structure	0.7
course availability/cancellation/waiting list	3.2
course grading fairness/exams/assignments	0.4
classroom decorum/noise	0.0
class size/impersonal classes	0.5
distance education dissatisfaction	0.5
other	0.3
University Related	**3.8%**
school/department politics	0.2
size/impersonal/overwhelming	0.9
school lacked spirit/ambience/sense of community	1.1
bureaucracy/procedures/paperwork	0.5
other	1.1
Academic Performance Related	**11.2%**
general dissatisfaction with grades	1.8
failing grades/required to withdraw	9.3
other	0.1
Personal Circumstances Related	**27.6%**
university not for me/poor fit/didn't like	2.6
lack of motivation/interest/boredom	3.3
too much social activity/didn't do enough work	0.0
illness/health/injury	4.8
relocated/wanted to live in another city	2.5
marital/parental/child circumstances or commitments	3.5
not ready for university	0.6
desire for travel	1.3
missed home/family/friends/old city	1.5
didn't fit socially on campus/low integration	0.3
not suited to distance education/correspondence	0.0
achieved goal, so departed (excluding transfers)	0.8
other/unspecified	6.4
Other	**2.4%**

Table 4

Positive Aspects of First Month at University (True Leaver Group): 2103 respondents providing 3008 responses=59.1% response rate

Course Related	**12.7%**
general/unspecified	6.4
distance education/correspondence	1.2
class sizes	1.4
course variety/selection	0.1
challenge/stimulation/exposure to new material	2.7
career/job relatedness	0.1
course availability/ability to register in desired courses	0.6
UNIV 100/introduction to university courses	0.0
tele-reg/web-reg/other registration related	0.1
schedule/flexibility/work and study schedule	0.3
other	0.8
Professors/Instruction Related	**12.8%**
general/unspecified	4.5
quality of teaching/instructors/teaching methods	4.4
approachability/helpfulness/individual attention	3.4
focus on teaching	0.0
focus on research	0.0
focus on senior/graduate students	0.0
distance education/correspondence tutors	0.4
language barriers/issues	0.0
TA-specific responses	0.1
other	0.0
Program/Curriculum Related (not course specific)	**2.5%**
general/unspecified	1.4
co-operative education	0.1
transfer credit acceptance	0.0
availability of program/ability to enrol in desired program	0.0
workload pressure/courseload/level of difficulty	0.3
prerequisite course issues	0.0
program/curriculum structure/design; program quality	0.8
other	0.2
Student Related	**2.9%**
general/unspecified	0.8
calibre/quality of students (academic perspective)	0.2
calibre/quality of students (social, maturity)	0.1
student academic interactions; study/discuss. groups	0.5
interactions with students (social)	0.4
diversity of student body	0.2
other	0.7
Academic Performance Related	**1.3%**
general/unspecified	0.3
amount learned/sense of accomplishment/goal realized	0.7
extent to which focused on study	0.0
other	0.3

Social/Personal Issues Related	**48.6%**
general/lifestyle/unspecified	2.0
newness/excitement	7.0
transition from/comparison to secondary school	3.6
transition from/comparison to college	0.5
transition from/comparison to another university	0.2
environment/atmosphere/ambience/culture/friendliness	12.4
sports/athletic/recreational/extra-curricular	1.1
met people/got to know people/ability to make friends	8.5
living arrangements/housing (residence)	3.8
living arrangements/housing (off campus)	0.2
independence/freedom/distance from parents	1.9
family/personal/health issues	0.0
social integration/loneliness/isolation/homesickness	0.8
relocation issues (other than housing)	0.0
disability/special status/special circumstances related	0.0
partied/socialized too much/had lots of fun	1.7
previous friends at school	1.1
overwhelming/adapting to new enriv/culture shock	0.6
other	0.2
Services/Facilities Related	**13.9%**
general services/unspecified services	0.1
general facilities/unspecified facilities	5.8
orientation/briefings/introduction/week of welcome	4.4
helpfulness/supportiveness of staff (excluding faculty)	1.5
organization/administration efficiency/bureaucracy	0.3
academic advising/guidance	0.2
staff availability/number of staff/staffing levels/lineups	0.0
degree of focus/attention to special needs/circumstances	0.1
accessibility of resources or info (general)	0.6
other	0.0
Other Issues	**7.4%**
size of institution [too]small	0.0
size of institution [too]large/volume of people	0.0
city/province/weather/area/campus location	1.9
return to academic environment	1.4
commuting/transportation issues	0.1
financial issues/tuition	0.1
(not) ready for the experience/(not) prepared for univ.	0.0
other	3.9

Table 5

Negative Aspects of First Month at University (True Leaver Group): 444 respondents providing 615 responses=12.5% response rate

Course Related	13.4%
general/unspecified	0.5
distance education/correspondence	1.1
class sizes	5.2
course variety/selection	0.0
challenge/stimulation/exposure to new material	1.6
career/job relatedness	0.0
course availability/ability to register in desired courses	2.9
UNIV 100/introduction to university courses	0.0
tele-reg/web-reg/other registration related	1.1
schedule/flexibility/work and study schedule	0.0
other	1.0

Professors/Instruction Related	8.6%
general/unspecified	1.0
quality of teaching/instructors/teaching methods	2.1
approachability/helpfulness/individual attention	3.3
focus on teaching	0.0
focus on research	0.2
focus on senior/graduate students	0.0
distance education/correspondence tutors	0.8
language barriers/issues	0.3
TA-specific responses	0.7
other	0.2

Program/Curriculum Related (not course specific)	8.1%
general/unspecified	0.7
co-operative education	0.0
transfer credit acceptance	1.1
availability of program/ability to enrol in desired program	0.3
workload pressure/courseload/level of difficulty	2.3
prerequisite course issues	0.5
program/curriculum structure/design; program quality	1.0
other	0.2

Student Related	1.6%
general/unspecified	0.3
calibre/quality of students (academic perspective)	0.0
calibre/quality of students (social, maturity)	0.3
student academic interactions; study/disc. groups	0.0
interactions with students (social)	0.5
diversity of student body	0.0
other	0.5

Academic Performance Related	1.8%
general/unspecified	0.5
amount learned/sense of accomplishment/goal realized	0.8
extent to which focused on study	0.2
other	0.3

Social/Personal Issues Related	42.2%
general/lifestyle/unspecified	0.3
newness/excitement	0.0
transition from/comparison to secondary school	4.7
transition from/comparison to college	0.8
transition from/comparison to another university	0.5
environment/atmosphere/ambience/culture/friendliness	8.3
sports/athletic/recreational/extra-curricular	0.2
met people/got to know people/ability to make friends	1.5
living arrangements/housing (residence)	4.1
living arrangements/housing (off campus)	1.3
independence/freedom/distance from parents	0.8
family/personal/health issues	1.5
social integration/loneliness/isolation/homesickness	10.9
relocation issues (other than housing)	0.0
disability/special status/special circumstances related	0.0
partied/socialized too much/had lots of fun	0.0
previous friends at school	0.0
overwhelming/adapting to new envir./culture shock	6.8
other	0.5

Services/Facilities Related	7.7%
general services/unspecified services	4.7
general facilities/unspecified facilities	2.8
orientation/briefings/introduction/week of welcome	1.8
helpfulness/supportiveness of staff (excluding faculty)	1.5
organization/administration efficiency/bureaucracy	0.8
academic advising/guidance	0.3
staff availability/number of staff/staffing levels/lineups	0.2
degree of attention to special needs/circumstances	1.6
accessibility of resources or info (general)	0.0
other	1.0

Other Issues	12.0%
size of institution [too]small	0.0
size of institution [too]large/volume of people	3.9
city/province/weather/area/campus location	0.7
return to academic environment	0.0
commuting/transportation issues	1.6
financial issues/tuition	0.5
(not) ready for the experience/(not) prepared for univ.	1.5
other	3.8

Table 4

Positive Aspects of First Month at University (True Leaver Group): 2103 respondents providing 3008 responses=59.1% response rate

Course Related	**13.7%**
general/unspecified	6.4
distance education/correspondence	1.2
class sizes	1.4
course variety/selection	0.1
challenge/stimulation/exposure to new material	2.7
career/job relatedness	0.1
course availability/ability to register in desired courses	0.6
UNIV 100/introduction to university courses	0.0
tele-reg/web-reg/other registration related	0.1
schedule/flexibility/work and study schedule	0.3
other	0.8
Professors/Instruction Related	**12.8%**
general/unspecified	4.5
quality of teaching/instructors/teaching methods	4.4
approachability/helpfulness/individual attention	3.4
focus on teaching	0.0
focus on research	0.0
focus on senior/graduate students	0.0
distance education/correspondence tutors	0.4
language barriers/issues	0.0
TA-specific responses	0.1
other	0.0
Program/Curriculum Related (not course specific)	**2.8%**
general/unspecified	1.4
co-operative education	0.1
transfer credit acceptance	0.0
availability of program/ability to enrol in desired program	0.0
workload pressure/courseload/level of difficulty	0.3
prerequisite course issues	0.0
program/curriculum structure/design; program quality	0.8
other	0.2
Student Related	**2.9%**
general/unspecified	0.8
calibre/quality of students (academic perspective)	0.2
calibre/quality of students (social, maturity)	0.1
student academic interactions; study/discuss. groups	0.5
interactions with students (social)	0.4
diversity of student body	0.2
other	0.7
Academic Performance Related	**1.3%**
general/unspecified	0.3
amount learned/sense of accomplishment/goal realized	0.7
extent to which focused on study	0.0
other	0.3

Social/Personal Issues Related	**45.6%**
general/lifestyle/unspecified	2.0
newness/excitement	7.0
transition from/comparison to secondary school	3.6
transition from/comparison to college	0.5
transition from/comparison to another university	0.2
environment/atmosphere/ambience/culture/friendliness	12.4
sports/athletic/recreational/extra-curricular	1.1
met people/got to know people/ability to make friends	8.5
living arrangements/housing (residence)	3.8
living arrangements/housing (off campus)	0.2
independence/freedom/distance from parents	1.9
family/personal/health issues	0.0
social integration/loneliness/isolation/homesickness	0.8
relocation issues (other than housing)	0.0
disability/special status/special circumstances related	0.0
partied/socialized too much/had lots of fun	1.7
previous friends at school	1.1
overwhelming/adapting to new envir/culture shock	0.6
other	0.2
Services/Facilities Related	**13.0%**
general services/unspecified services	0.1
general facilities/unspecified facilities	5.8
orientation/briefings/introduction/week of welcome	4.4
helpfulness/supportiveness of staff (excluding faculty)	1.5
organization/administration efficiency/bureaucracy	0.3
academic advising/guidance	0.2
staff availability/number of staff/staffing levels/lineups	0.0
degree of focus/attention to special needs/circumstances	0.1
accessibility of resources or info (general)	0.6
other	0.0
Other Issues	**7.4%**
size of institution [too]small	0.0
size of institution [too]large/volume of people	0.0
city/province/weather/area/campus location	1.9
return to academic environment	1.4
commuting/transportation issues	0.1
financial issues/tuition	0.1
(not) ready for the experience/(not) prepared for univ.	0.0
other	3.9

Table 5

Negative Aspects of First Month at University (True Leaver Group): 444 respondents providing 615 responses=12.5% response rate

Course Related	**13.4%**
general/unspecified	0.5
distance education/correspondence	1.1
class sizes	5.2
course variety/selection	0.0
challenge/stimulation/exposure to new material	1.6
career/job relatedness	0.0
course availability/ability to register in desired courses	2.9
UNIV 100/introduction to university courses	0.0
tele-reg/web-reg/other registration related	1.1
schedule/flexibility/work and study schedule	0.0
other	1.0
Professors/Instruction Related	**8.8%**
general/unspecified	1.0
quality of teaching/instructors/teaching methods	2.1
approachability/helpfulness/individual attention	3.3
focus on teaching	0.0
focus on research	0.2
focus on senior/graduate students	0.0
distance education/correspondence tutors	0.8
language barriers/issues	0.3
TA-specific responses	0.7
other	0.2
Program/Curriculum Related (not course specific)	**6.1%**
general/unspecified	0.7
co-operative education	0.0
transfer credit acceptance	1.1
availability of program/ability to enrol in desired program	0.3
workload pressure/courseload/level of difficulty	2.3
prerequisite course issues	0.5
program/curriculum structure/design; program quality	1.0
other	0.2
Student Related	**1.6%**
general/unspecified	0.3
calibre/quality of students (academic perspective)	0.0
calibre/quality of students (social, maturity)	0.3
student academic interactions; study/disc. groups	0.0
interactions with students (social)	0.5
diversity of student body	0.0
other	0.5
Academic Performance Related	**1.8%**
general/unspecified	0.5
amount learned/sense of accomplishment/goal realized	0.8
extent to which focused on study	0.2
other	0.3

Social/Personal Issues Related	**42.2%**
general/lifestyle/unspecified	0.3
newness/excitement	0.0
transition from/comparison to secondary school	4.7
transition from/comparison to college	0.8
transition from/comparison to another university	0.5
environment/atmosphere/ambience/culture/friendliness	8.3
sports/athletic/recreational/extra-curricular	0.2
met people/got to know people/ability to make friends	1.5
living arrangements/housing (residence)	4.1
living arrangements/housing (off campus)	1.3
independence/freedom/distance from parents	0.8
family/personal/health issues	1.5
social integration/loneliness/isolation/homesickness	10.9
relocation issues (other than housing)	0.0
disability/special status/special circumstances related	0.0
partied/socialized too much/had lots of fun	0.0
previous friends at school	0.0
overwhelming/adapting to new envir./culture shock	6.8
other	0.5
Services/Facilities Related	**14.7%**
general services/unspecified services	4.7
general facilities/unspecified facilities	2.8
orientation/briefings/introduction/week of welcome	1.8
helpfulness/supportiveness of staff (excluding faculty)	1.5
organization/administration efficiency/bureaucracy	0.8
academic advising/guidance	0.3
staff availability/number of staff/staffing levels/lineups	0.2
degree of attention to special needs/circumstances	1.6
accessibility of resources or info (general)	0.0
other	1.0
Other Issues	**12.0%**
size of institution [too]small	0.0
size of institution [too]large/volume of people	3.9
city/province/weather/area/campus location	0.7
return to academic environment	0.0
commuting/transportation issues	1.6
financial issues/tuition	0.5
(not) ready for the experience/(not) prepared for univ.	1.5
other	3.8

Table 6

What [More] Could University Have Done (True Leaver Group): 1379 respondents providing 1670 responses=38.8% response rate

Program Related	18.8%
create more spaces/availability/lower admission reqts	3.1
improve co-op procedures/administration	0.5
revise RTW/leave/withdrawal/probation regulations	2.7
improve program quality	2.6
fairer credit transfer/recognition	2.0
PLA procedures/aptitude testing	0.1
offer program content students want	4.7
facilitate inter-faculty transfers/changes in majors	0.7
other program	2.4

Information/Communication Related	10.5%
general/unspecified information improvements	0.8
graduation requirements/degree audit	0.5
leaves/withdrawal/re-registration regulations	0.5
academic probation/RTW/re-admission regulations	1.0
personal counselling	1.6
job/career advising	1.1
academic advising	1.8
1st year/new student advising	0.2
study skills support and other student services	0.4
course registration procedures and complaints process	0.5
prerequisite course requirements	0.1
financial aid/support	0.2
program admission/progression regulations	0.2
transfer credit regulations	0.5
program workload	0.1
program changes/course cancellations/program requirem	1.0
other	

Faculty/Staff Related	11.4%
general/unspecified faculty/staff improvements	2.6
faculty attitude toward students/teaching	1.9
better quality faculty/instructors	2.5
better quality TAs/availability of TAs	0.5
better quality distance education tutors	0.2
better contact with faculty re: program/advising	0.8
support staff politeness/customer relations skills	0.9
professorial evaluations required	0.4
other	1.6

Fees/Financial Related	6.9%
higher tuition/fees	0.1
lower tuition/fees	1.9
better/better access to scholarships/bursaries	1.1
more generous/more access to student loan programs	0.5
more support/advocacy around loan/finance issues	0.5
emergency loan/bursary support	1.0
more job opportunities on campus	0.5
improved tuition refunds/service charges	0.6
other	0.7

Course Related	23.6%
general/unspecified course quality improvements	0.6
improved distance education tutors	0.1
improved distance education other aspects	2.8
flexible schedule/locations for working/part-time students	4.7
grading policies/fairness	1.4
incomplete course/extensions/deadlines regulations	0.4
course availability/waitlists	5.6
smaller classes	2.5
flexibility/accommodation at exams/end of term	0.1
flexibility/accommodation for special needs/circumstance	1.2
offer greater variety of courses	1.7
more practical/relevant course content	0.8
other	1.7

Services/Support Related	20.8%
general/unspecified service improvements	0.6
administrative efficiency/bureaucracy/records	2.0
distance education related services	0.7
campus social life/spirit/orientation/atmosphere	1.3
advising for at risk students/early warning system	1.3
more/quicker access to academic advising	3.6
better quality academic advising	4.0
first year specific academic advising	0.3
study/exam/learning skills services	0.2
more personal/individualized/face to face services	3.4
more personal counselling	1.7
need exit survey/contact	0.5
other	1.2

Other	7.7%
mature student concerns	0.7
childcare	0.5
parking/bus service/transportation	0.5
housing/residence	0.7
athletics/recreation	0.6
campus facilities	0.8
other	3.9

Table 7

What Did You Get from Your University Experience (True Leaver Group): 2481 respondents providing 3352 responses=69.8% response rate

Academic Development/Skills Acquisition Related	29.4%
learned little/nothing, unspecified discipline/program	0.2
learned moderate amount unspec. discipline/program	9.5
learned large amount, unspec. discipline/program	2.5
obtained specific academic benefit (credits, got year)	2.2
learned moderate amount, specified discipline/program	0.8
learned large amount, specified discipline/program	0.7
developed skills - unspecified area	0.1
developed skills - critical/analytical thinking	1.4
developed skills - communications/working with people	0.7
developed skills - reading/writing	0.7
developed skills - computing/technical	0.3
developed skills - time management/self discipline	4.9
developed skills - other	0.8
foundation/appreciation for lifelong learning	1.5
realized benefits of/appreciation for university/study	3.1

Social/Personal Development Issues	36.5%
little/no development, unspecified	0.0
moderate/some development, unspecified	3.1
large amount of development, unspecified	0.2
new views/perspective/world view/broadened horizons	4.1
self actualization/achievement/learned about self	3.1
maturity/personal responsibility	2.3
made friends/had fun	7.2
clearer view of educational goals/interests	3.5
independence/living on own	4.3
self confidence	0.7
program/university not for me; not ready	6.8
other	1.2

University-Scale Insights and Opinions	13.4%
university is liberating/enriching/other positive	2.1
university is frustrating/waste of time/other negative	3.0
university not pensea/not appropriate for all	0.5
transition to university difficult/different	0.8
understand university now	4.7
university better than college	0.0
university inferior to college	0.3
university is competitive	0.3
university is bureaucratic	0.4
other university-related comments	1.3

Job/Career/Employment Related	6.9%
university helped job/career/income	1.7
university helped clarify employment goals/interests	3.8
valuable work/hands on experience (co-op, summer job)	0.5
made professional contacts/networking	0.6
other	0.3

Assessments of University	9.5%
faculty/instructional quality positive	0.4
faculty/instructional quality negative	0.5
faculty approachability/contact positive	0.4
faculty approachability/contact negative	0.4
faculty (other) positive	0.1
faculty (other) negative	0.5
course content/material positive	0.6
course content/material negative	0.2
course availability/waitlists/registration negative	0.3
class sizes positive	0.1
class sizes negative	0.3
distance education/correspondence positive	0.1
distance education/correspondence negative	0.2
course (other) positive	0.1
course (other) negative	0.1
program admission/cutoffs/advancement positive	0.0
program admission/cutoffs/advancement negative	0.1
program transfer credit positive	0.0
program transfer credit negative	0.1
program fit positive	0.0
program fit negative	0.1
program (other) positive	0.4
program (other) negative	0.8
counselling/advising/guidance positive	0.0
counselling/advising/guidance negative	0.2
other student service positive	0.0
other student service negative	0.0
facilities/campus positive	0.9
facilities/campus negative	0.9
service levels/staffing positive	0.0
service levels/staffing negative	0.0
services (other) positive	0.0
services (other) negative	0.1
staff politeness/helpfulness positive	0.0
staff politeness/helpfulness negative	0.3
flexibility/accommodation of needs positive	0.0
flexibility/accommodation of needs negative	0.1
communication/information flows positive	0.0
communication/information flows negative	0.1
fees/funding/budget positive	0.0
fees/funding/budget negative	0.1
students positive	0.2
students negative	0.1
other university assessment positive	0.3
other university assessment negative	0.4

Other	3.9%

Table 6

What [More] Could University Have Done (True Leaver Group): 1379 respondents providing 1670 responses=38.8% response rate

Program Related	18.6%
create more spaces/availability/lower admission reqts	3.1
improve co-op procedures/administration	0.5
revise RTW/leave/withdrawal/probation regulations	2.7
improve program quality	2.6
fairer credit transfer/recognition	2.0
PLA procedures/aptitude testing	0.1
offer program content students want	4.7
facilitate inter-faculty transfers/changes in majors	0.7
other program	2.4

Information/Communication Related	10.5%
general/unspecified information improvements	0.8
graduation requirements/degree audit	0.5
leaves/withdrawal/re-registration regulations	0.5
academic probation/RTW/re-admission regulations	1.0
personal counselling	1.6
job/career advising	1.1
academic advising	1.8
1st year/new student advising	0.2
study skills support and other student services	0.4
course registration procedures and complaints process	0.5
prerequisite course requirements	0.1
financial aid/support	0.2
program admission/progression regulations	0.2
transfer credit regulations	0.5
program workload	0.1
program changes/course cancellations/program requirem	1.0
other	

Faculty/Staff Related	11.4%
general/unspecified faculty/staff improvements	2.6
faculty attitude toward students/teaching	1.9
better quality faculty/instructors	2.5
better quality TAs/availability of TAs	0.5
better quality distance education tutors	0.2
better contact with faculty re: program/advising	0.8
support staff politeness/customer relations skills	0.9
professorial evaluations required	0.4
other	1.6

Fees/Financial Related	6.9%
higher tuition/fees	0.1
lower tuition/fees	1.9
better/better access to scholarships/bursaries	1.1
more generous/more access to student loan programs	0.5
more support/advocacy around loan/finance issues	0.5
emergency loan/bursary support	1.0
more job opportunities on campus	0.5
improved tuition refunds/service charges	0.6
other	0.7

Course Related	23.6%
general/unspecified course quality improvements	0.6
improved distance education tutors	0.1
improved distance education other aspects	2.8
flexible schedule/locations for working/part-time students	4.7
grading policies/fairness	1.4
incomplete course/extensions/deadlines regulations	0.4
course availability/waitlists	5.6
smaller classes	2.5
flexibility/accommodation at exams/end of term	0.1
flexibility/accommodation for special needs/circumstance	1.2
offer greater variety of courses	1.7
more practical/relevant course content	0.8
other	1.7

Services/Support Related	20.5%
general/unspecified service improvements	0.6
administrative efficiency/bureaucracy/records	2.0
distance education related services	0.7
campus social life/spirit/orientation/atmosphere	1.3
advising for at risk students/early warning system	1.3
more/quicker access to academic advising	3.6
better quality academic advising	4.0
first year specific academic advising	0.3
study/exam/learning skills services	0.2
more personal/individualized/face to face services	3.4
more personal counselling	1.7
need exit survey/contact	0.5
other	1.2

Other	7.1%
mature student concerns	0.7
childcare	0.5
parking/bus service/transportation	0.5
housing/residence	0.7
athletics/recreation	0.6
campus facilities	0.8
other	3.9

Table 7

What Did You Get from Your University Experience (True Leaver Group): 2481 respondents providing 3352 responses=69.8% response rate

Academic Development/Skills Acquisition Related	29.4%
learned little/nothing, unspecified discipline/program	0.2
learned moderate amount unspec. discipline/program	9.5
learned large amount, unspec. discipline/program	2.5
obtained specific academic benefit (credits, got year)	2.2
learned moderate amount, specified discipline/program	0.8
learned large amount, specified discipline/program	0.7
developed skills - unspecified area	0.1
developed skills - critical/analytical thinking	1.4
developed skills - communications/working with people	0.7
developed skills - reading/writing	0.7
developed skills - computing/technical	0.3
developed skills - time management/self discipline	4.9
developed skills - other	0.8
foundation/appreciation for lifelong learning	1.5
realized benefits of/appreciation for university/study	3.1

Social/Personal Development Issues	30.5%
little/no development, unspecified	0.0
moderate/some development, unspecified	3.1
large amount of development, unspecified	0.2
new views/perspective/world view/broadened horizons	4.1
self actualization/achievement/learned about self	3.1
maturity/personal responsibility	2.3
made friends/had fun	7.2
clearer view of educational goals/interests	3.5
independence/living on own	4.3
self confidence	0.7
program/university not for me; not ready	6.8
other	1.2

University-Scale Insights and Opinions	13.4%
university is liberating/enriching/other positive	2.1
university is frustrating/waste of time/other negative	3.0
university not panacea/not appropriate for all	0.5
transition to university difficult/different	0.8
understand university now	4.7
university better than college	0.0
university inferior to college	0.3
university is competitive	0.3
university is bureaucratic	0.4
other university-related comments	1.3

Job/Career/Employment Related	6.9%
university helped job/career/income	1.7
university helped clarify employment goals/interests	3.8
valuable work/hands on experience (co-op, summer job)	0.5
made professional contacts/networking	0.6
other	0.3

Assessments of University	9.5%
faculty/instructional quality positive	0.4
faculty/instructional quality negative	0.5
faculty approachability/contact positive	0.4
faculty approachability/contact negative	0.4
faculty (other) positive	0.1
faculty (other) negative	0.5
course content/material positive	0.6
course content/material negative	0.2
course availability/waitlists/registration negative	0.3
class sizes positive	0.1
class sizes negative	0.3
distance education/correspondence positive	0.1
distance education/correspondence negative	0.2
course (other) positive	0.1
course (other) negative	0.1
program admission/cutoffs/advancement positive	0.0
program admission/cutoffs/advancement negative	0.1
program transfer credit positive	0.0
program transfer credit negative	0.1
program fit positive	0.0
program fit negative	0.1
program (other) positive	0.4
program (other) negative	0.8
counselling/advising/guidance positive	0.0
counselling/advising/guidance negative	0.2
other student service positive	0.0
other student service negative	0.0
facilities/campus positive	0.9
facilities/campus negative	0.9
service levels/staffing positive	0.0
service levels/staffing negative	0.0
services (other) positive	0.0
services (other) negative	0.1
staff politeness/helpfulness positive	0.0
staff politeness/helpfulness negative	0.3
flexibility/accommodation of needs positive	0.0
flexibility/accommodation of needs negative	0.1
communication/information flows positive	0.0
communication/information flows negative	0.1
fees/funding/budget positive	0.0
fees/funding/budget negative	0.1
students positive	0.2
students negative	0.1
other university assessment positive	0.3
other university assessment negative	0.4

Other	3.8%

Table 8

Summary Comparison of Leaver Groups

		Stopouts	Planned Transfers	Pre-Grad Program	Professional Study	Other Non Degree	Short Stays	True Leavers	Total Sample
Demographics									
Female (%)		53.9	55.0	61.3	75.8	62.5	60.1	56.3	57.2
Visible minority (%)		23.8	34.0	18.0	5.3	18.0	28.7	18.9	20.8
Age	less than 20 (%)	24.7	38.5	0.0	0.0	18.6	38.5	25.8	29.1
	30 or more (%)	21.0	10.4	51.4	67.4	38.2	19.3	16.7	21.3
	mean (years)	26.0	23.3	33.6	36.3	30.2	25.6	24.9	25.9
Application/Admission									
Applied elsewhere (%)		48.6	63.4			35.6	53.7	51.3	49.7
Degree goal on entry (%)		99.4	96.2			0.5	97.3	97.0	83.6
Why chose univ.	program avail (%)	56.8	44.3			51.5	57.4	51.6	52.0
	program qual (%)	51.1	33.3			27.8	36.7	39.3	38.8
Applied as BC secondary (%)		47.1	59.2	13.5	2.1	27.6	36.2	49.3	44.9
Applied with "A" admis. Avg. (%)		35.1	43.9	58.2	51.4	57.0	73.1	44.5	45.7
Study Behaviour									
Attended one session or less (%)		20.0	38.0	27.0	26.3	56.6	90.9	28.3	33.6
Cumul. avg. "D" or less (%)		23.4	38.9	4.9	5.6	18.3	94.8	22.5	23.7
Cumul. credits completed (mean #)		34.9	25.9	24.8	24.9	14.3	0.8	30.5	26.8
Required to withdraw (%)		30.3	28.5			8.2	1.1	20.0	19.8
"Very likely" to return (%)		100.0	15.1			8.3	0.0	0.0	18.1
Reason for Leaving									
Unprompted (as post-coded)	first	reqd to withdraw	reqd to withdraw			met goals	didn't really attend	reqd to withdraw	reqd to withdraw
	second	illness	transfer			transfer	transfer	financial (no money)	financial (no money)
	third	personal (unspec.)	financial (no money)			program unavail.	illness	personal (unspec.)	personal (unspec.)
	fourth	financial (no money)	personal (unspec.)			job/study conflict	job/study conflict	transfer	transfer
Forced choice	grades (%)	33.5	33.0			9.3	4.8	30.3	27.1
	financial (%)	28.2	28.8			14.5	14.4	27.3	25.3
	personal (%)	52.2	42.0			29.8	48.4	46.0	44.4
	employment (%)	21.8	22.4			14.3	12.2	19.8	19.2
Perceptions/Satisfaction									
Found first month positive (%)		70.2	55.2			70.5	31.4	63.4	63.7
Able to register desired program (%)		85.4	79.5			81.7	76.6	81.9	82.0
Able to register in "all" courses (%)		43.9	41.7			63.1	37.2	43.5	46.9
Very satisfied	prof. availability (%)	28.9	17.0			38.4	10.6	23.1	25.2
	quality teaching (%)	28.4	22.4			40.5	16.5	24.0	28.6
Very positive about univ. on departure		23.0	13.9			30.2	11.2	15.2	18.2
Great extent role in pers. growth (%)		38.0	26.5			28.2	19.2	30.2	30.7
Great extent role in acad. dev't (%)		34.3	23.0			28.6	9.6	19.5	22.8
Service Usage									
Used academic advising (%)		43.8	33.5			17.1	23.9	35.8	33.1
Used personal counselling (%)		16.3	16.5			7.1	8.0	12.9	12.7
Financial									
Awarded gov't. assistance (%)		38.0	38.4			22.0	22.9	34.1	32.9
Primary income	employment (%)	33.0	24.5			37.8	27.7	28.9	30.4
	parents (%)	26.2	36.8			17.6	29.8	29.2	27.7
	student loan (%)	18.8	17.5			10.5	12.8	17.6	19.6
Activities Since Departure									
Attended elsewhere (%)		48.2	71.0			54.8	69.7	60.1	58.8
same program (%)		41.6	39.9			34.2	50.4	33.0	35.4
at BC college/institute (%)		76.4	52.5			49.3	26.7	59.2	58.0
Main activity now	work FT (%)	42.9	29.2			47.9	30.3	40.2	40.6
	work PT (%)	7.6	5.7			5.5	1.1	5.1	5.4
	attend school (%)	33.8	54.5			35.3	59.6	43.1	42.1
Annualized salary (mean $)		$34,150	$28,600			$38,100	$43,500	$34,000	$34,600
Management/prof'l employment (%)		31.4	26.2			46.1	45.6	30.1	33.9

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Reasons for Leaving: Selected Verbal Responses

As noted in the introduction, responses to various key questions were recorded verbatim. These responses, as post-coded, have been discussed above in a quantitative fashion for each of the seven leaver groups. This section presents the responses to the question "What was your main reason for leaving university?" in their original text form, in order to provide a sense of the multi-faceted nature of many of the responses. The responses are organized around some of the main themes presented above.

Academic Performance

I was given a notice for academic probation, then kicked out. However, three weeks later administration called to tell me that I was still allowed to attend. But by then, I had gotten a job and felt very frustrated over their error.

I was required to withdraw, as I didn't meet academic requirements due to family problems, as my grandfather had died. The university did not take this into consideration when grading me. I had to wait one year before returning.

I enrolled for a second time to get rid of the black mark on my record from the first time I enrolled. I was required to withdraw the first time I attended. I achieved this, and then completed my degree in Alberta.

I lost focus part way through my second semester and started missing classes. In my first semester, I ended up with mono and also missed classes. After two semesters, I was required to withdraw.

I was fed up with school. It was very depressing, and my grades were starting to slip because it affected my attitude.

In the third year of the program, they thought my GPA was too low [to continue], and I didn't want to waste my time taking courses to increase it. I decided to go to another institution.

Financial Issues

I was taking on a lot of student loans, and I figured I would need a certain income afterward to be able to pay that back and support my family. I felt that in my field of study, there wouldn't be any well-paying jobs in the Vancouver area.

My tuition would be paid if I went to [university]. So I took a few prerequisite courses that may help me in the future if I want to attend college. I only attended because my education cost me nothing.

The cost factor. When you have a family, a mortgage, and bills to pay, it's hard to afford the courses. And when you're a mature student and you have to work to afford to go to school, it's a little difficult to do it all.

I could not use my entrance scholarship unless I attended full-time. As a mature student with children and a job, there was no flexibility, which was a real barrier for me.

I wanted to take cheaper education closer to my home so that I could transfer back [to university] later if I wanted or needed to.

It was getting too expensive to travel home for holiday visits with my family in Ontario. Also, the cost of living in general was higher than what I had been used to.

Personal Circumstances

Outside personal issues were interfering with my ability to focus on school. I was also questioning whether or not university was the best course of action for me. My class load was too heavy, and I had taken on too much.

The first reason was my being hospitalized; when I came back I was not able to finish or get a refund.

I wanted to go back home. My boyfriend was going to be starting medical school, and I wanted to live with him. And I had to transfer to UBC at that time, because they wouldn't transfer more than two years of credits.

It was too expensive, my daughter was born, and I had to make some serious decisions.

I got sick in my last semester and missed quite a few classes and two exams, and would have had to make up quite a bit of work. Financially, I could not have lived there another semester.

Transfer

I decided to go to chiropractic college. I decided it would take too long to complete my degree and then go to chiropractic college and I wanted to get on with it. So I just did the prerequisites and left.

I wanted to attend full time at the University College of the Cariboo, and I just wanted some extra courses from UNBC.

The program I wanted was not available at UVic. I registered at UVic, but was immediately accepted at the University of Manitoba, which has the pharmacy program I want, so I never attended any classes at UVic.

I was doing correspondence courses through SFU, and wanted to take courses at UNBC for additional credit. I completed the courses [at UNBC] and continue to take correspondence courses through SFU.

I changed my mind about what I wanted to do, and my university didn't have the program, so I went to Cariboo College to continue with some courses that would transfer to SFU where I wanted to go.

Employment

I needed two courses to graduate and they weren't readily available. I was therefore required to take a break in my studies, which resulted in the necessity to start paying student loans back. The end result of this was the need to work full-time.

Being a mature student with a full-time job, I take courses as time permits, usually in the summer session. I just haven't registered yet for this summer's courses.

I found it too exhausting to work full-time, and manage time, for my studies to get the attention they needed. My work puts me through short courses for continuing upgrades that are needed in my job.

I realized my job is secure and that this degree would not improve my salary. I decided to stay at a regular job to build up a pension, and the necessity was not there as I was just taking classes for interest.

I had a job offer I couldn't refuse. Plus, I already had a Bachelor of Applied Science from the previous year and decided that computer science could wait because I was busy with work.

My current job is very high crisis – we had two suicides in our community today. I have full intentions of picking up when I leave my current job, but right now, it's just not possible.

Program and Course Unavailability

I couldn't get in to the business faculty. They required me to enter into another program and then re-apply. I was not willing to do that and if I had known this would occur, I probably would not have attended.

I disliked the availability of classes. I had a full-time job, and the classes were not working with my schedule.

The Business GPA requirement was very high, the demand for the program was very high, and there were not enough spaces available. I was wasting my time taking general courses and not being able to register in Business.

I didn't get all of the courses I needed for my first year, and the social like kind of got me out of going to all my classes, and when my scholarship ran out, I couldn't get any more because of my poor grades, so I couldn't afford to go back.

Inflexibility within the institution in terms of not being able to take the courses I wanted and having to take courses that are irrelevant to me, and a lack of conviction that what I was doing there was leading to what I wanted to do.

I never really thought of it as leaving. It was more a case of not being able to get into what I wanted there [a Computing course].

Social Fit and Motivation

I was living on campus and had a difficult time socially. There was no life after three or four in the afternoon. I felt isolated, and I also didn't get along with my roommate. There was no club life that I could get into.

I lost interest in school. I went from high school, to college, to university without a break. I needed to take a break to work and earn money and experience a different existence.

I didn't feel that pursuing an education would be beneficial to me right now. My brain was not in to it. I felt it would be better for me to learn when I was ready to do it.

I found it to be impersonal, and not knowing exactly what I planned to do with the rest of my life was a great deterrent when placed with hundreds of people who did.

Personal reasons. I wasn't motivated and felt like I wasn't getting anywhere.

Dissatisfaction with Specific Services

I was totally dissatisfied with the courses. I stood out because I was a mature student. There were not enough courses available in the department. I found the course content to be lower compared to other universities I attended.

I just hated the format of teaching. I was in a huge auditorium where I couldn't see my teacher. It was a difficult learning atmosphere. I found the classes very impersonal. It was very difficult to get help outside of class.

The teaching staff weren't helpful and didn't seem interested in helping students unless they were doing exceedingly well.

My essays weren't being fairly graded. I was very dissatisfied with the way some of my courses were being graded. I brought my case to the department, but wasn't successful.

Program Design and Program Fit

I found out I wasn't allowed to attend certain classes because I needed prerequisites, even though I was just auditing.

I wasn't sure if I was going in the right direction, and I didn't want to continue spending so much money on school until I had decided what to do. Also, the advisors couldn't answer my questions, and it made me think I was asking the wrong ones.

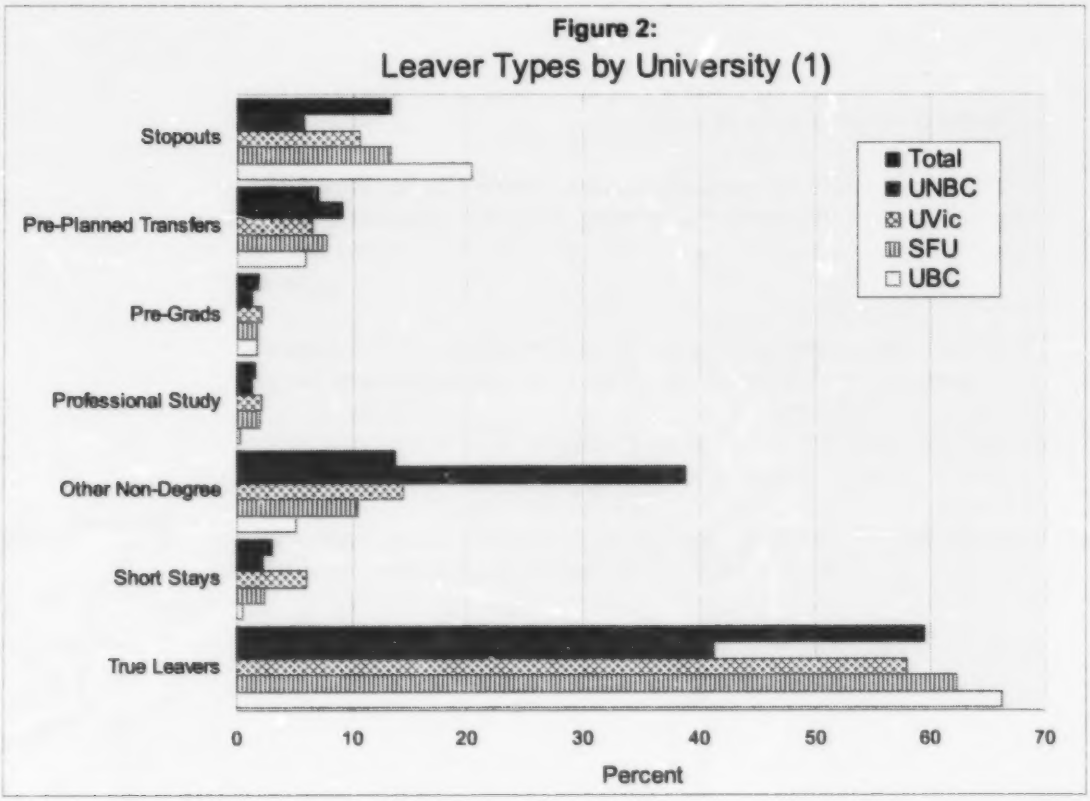
After realizing that I had probably not chosen the best field for me for graduate studies, I decided to postpone my continued academic endeavours until such time as I became more aware of my goals and aspirations.

I wasn't spending my money wisely there. I wasn't having a good time, and I didn't have a goal. I was wasting my money by being there just for the sake of going.

University-by-University Results

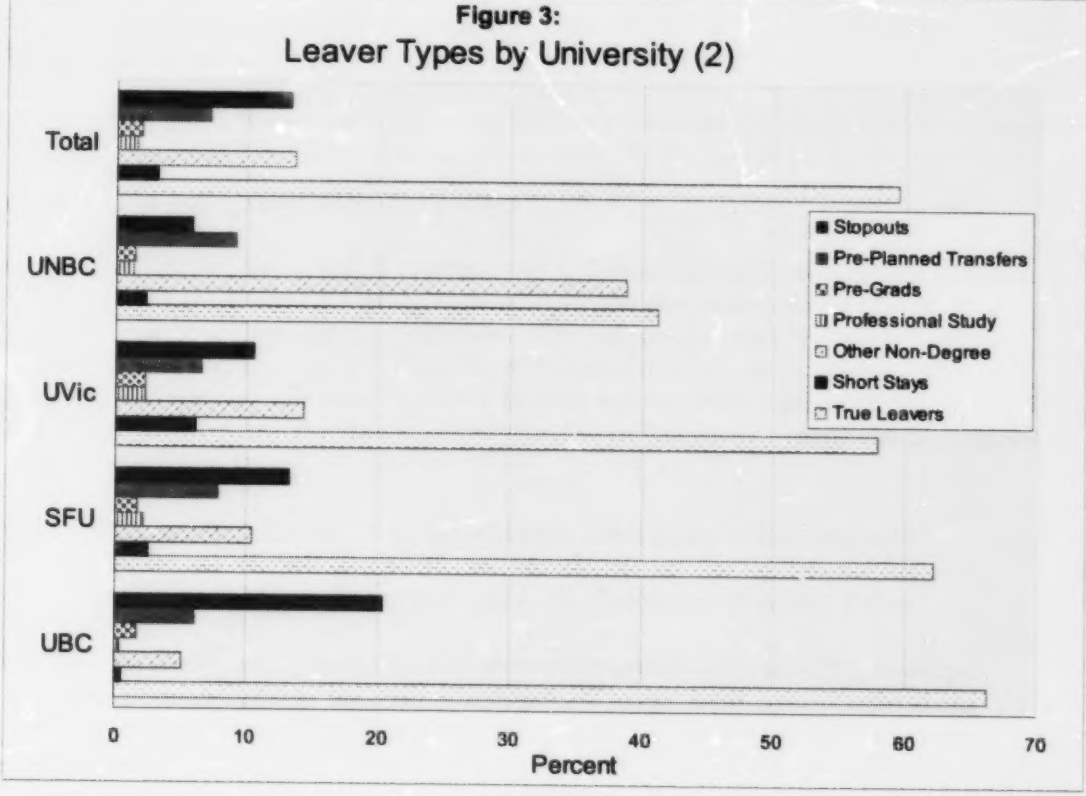
The focus of this report is on the BC university system overall, rather than on the individual participating universities. Each university is likely to pursue institution-specific analysis that may be reported on at a later date. However, a brief analysis of the results on a university-by-university basis was undertaken in order to provide a context for the level of diversity and differentiation within the BC pubic university sector and to point to at least a few key issues of interest at the university level.

Figure 2:



Though not shown in Figures 2 and 3 (Figure 3 follows), the demographic characteristics; application, admission and study behaviours; and perceptions/opinions of leavers do vary somewhat university-by-university. Such differences also exist across the entire student body; as a result, leaver differences at the university-by-university level are best examined within the context of each university's student body and the specific factors that might contribute to those differences.

Figure 3:



The key difference in this analysis is the composition of the total leaver group at each university:

- Stopouts represent over 20% of all leavers at the University of British Columbia but only 6% of the total at UNBC.
- Other non-degree students comprise only 5% of UBC's leavers but almost 40% of those at UNBC.
- Short stay registrants represent twice as large a proportion of total leavers at UVic as at any of the other universities.
- True leavers represent between 40% of the total leaver group at UNBC but about two-thirds of the total at UBC.

Conclusions and Policy, Service, and Accountability Implications

Defining the Population of Early Leavers

- No standardized definition of university early leavers exists. Variations in university record-keeping procedures and administrative and academic policies render the development of a universal standard both difficult and unlikely. However, if inter-institutional and inter-jurisdictional studies are to be conducted and knowledge of university attrition advanced, a relatively clear and consistent definition will be required, for both the population of leavers overall and for whatever sub-categories are suggested by this population.

- In particular, the following definitional issues require immediate resolution:

  - The status of short-stay registrants must be clarified, as indicated above.

  - In this study, categories of leavers were not mutually exclusive. The overlap in definition resulted in the need to subjectively assign some respondents to one or the other of the groups into which they fell. Either mutually exclusive categories of leavers will have to be defined, or clear criteria for assigning overlapping cases will have to be developed.

  - Students pursuing university study through distance education should be defined as a separate group to allow their inclusion or exclusion from the total sample as appropriate. Factors affecting attrition in distance education and the characteristics of distance education students are known to differ from those on campus.

  - Contact with self-defined stopouts is virtually inevitable in any survey of early leavers. Since the self-assessment of stopout status depends to some extent on the timing of the survey relative to departure and planned return dates, clear criteria for the definition of stopouts are necessary.

Questionnaire and Research Design

- A number of questions on the survey instrument could be improved.

- The departure date remains ambiguous. Students clearly depart both during their final session and at the end of the final session. Some officially withdraw from classes (and receive an in-session official withdrawal date and an academic record that reflects their formal departure). Others simply stop attending classes, fail to notify the university, and

generally receive low or failing grades and an end-of-session de facto withdrawal date. Better information concerning the dates on which particular events occurred would help to clarify the departure process.

- The responses demonstrate the diversity and complexity of the reasons why students leave university. These responses are often multi-faceted, and as survey responses they are, of course, self-assessed rather than being the product of formal independent assessment or validation. Further refinement of a typology of departure is required. Such a typology is likely to require a relatively large number of questions.

- For example, responses revealing a shortage of financial resources were often phrased simply as, "I ran out of money." Additional questions related to financial difficulties could deal with:

    - How much the student had set aside or budgeted for prior to starting university;
    - The proportion of this amount that was available as actual cash rather than commitments from relatives, loans, etc.;
    - Whether the budgeted amount was realistic, and what factors led to the discrepancy between budgeted and required expenses;
    - The point in time when financial concerns surfaced: before university began, during the first session, during the final session, etc.; and
    - Whether the student sought or obtained employment while studying.

- Another set of questions should deal with the dynamics of declining or low academic performance. All leaver groups mention academic performance as a key factor in departure, even when it appears to be the effect, rather than the cause of the decision to depart. More detailed questions would at least provide more insight into each general explanation for departure, they would increase understanding of the interactions between reasons for departure; and they would provide greater direction to the development of student risk self-assessment tools. Questions could examine such issues as:

    - When during the student's university experience did the perception and the reality of poor academic performance occur;
    - The timing of poor academic performance relative to other factors; and
    - For single-session students, the month-by-month progression of grades; and for multiple-session students, the session-by-session and month-by-month progression of grades.

- The relatively high rate of educational involvement subsequent to departure, particularly among those groups who did not plan to transfer, suggests the need for more detailed information on transfer intentions, motivations and behaviour. For example, students who indicated a prior intention to transfer, and who did transfer, but to another program at a non-university institution and only after a significant delay, may not in fact have experienced transfer as originally intended. Other students transferred to similar

programs at other universities with no, or only short, delays. Numerous questions could clarify the transfer process and the issues surrounding subsequent educational involvement:

- The institution and the type of institution the student originally intended to transfer to;
- The program the student originally intended to transfer to;
- Factors affecting the decision to change institution type or program; and
- Expectations and experiences at the new institution compared to those at the original university.

- More detailed information on study behaviour is needed, either from the student records system or from questions asked of respondents. A significant proportion of university students pursue "non-traditional" patterns of study; these provide context for the departure being examined. These could include:

  - Whether students had previously stopped out;
  - Shifts in full- vs. part-time study;
  - Attendance at classes during the last session
  - Percentage of the program completed/year of study; and
  - Prior educational activity including credentials awarded.

- Certain questions did not add much to the analysis, as constructed and asked. These include motivations for university generally and reasons for selecting a particular university. The questions generated a wide range of responses that did not correlate well either with the different leaver groups or with the reasons for departure.

- More information on unexpected and intervening life changes during study would provide more insight into the role that personal factors play in the decision to depart. A series of yes/no questions should deal with personal illness, illness of a family member, death of a family member or friend, loss/change of job, change in health status, work stress, etc.

Defining and Explaining Attrition

- Perhaps the two key findings of this study are that 40% of all reported departures are either planned or temporary, and that 59% of all leavers attend another educational institution within 24 months of their departure. These two findings demand a new perspective on the nature and implications of university attrition. In particular, the notion of attrition as indicative of personal or institutional failure appears to be particularly inappropriate in a significant proportion of cases.

- The literature on attrition corresponds fairly closely to the findings of this survey—that departure is a function of three kinds of factors: personal characteristics of the student

(age, prior education and achievement, socioeconomic status), characteristics of the institution (academic requirements, degree of difficulty, course/program availability, campus size and climate), changes in the students' circumstances that originally led to their involvement (illness, financial resources, self-assessment of suitability for university), and of course, the various interactions between these factors.

- This survey points clearly toward a number of key factors and interactions in the decision to depart: poor academic performance, financial constraints, changed goals or personal factors contributing to transfer, employment issues (job stress, intervening employment opportunity), and course/program/service dissatisfaction (particularly program unavailability). While the findings clearly have value at this level, they do not constitute a multivariate explanation of early leaving (the "holy grail" of attrition research). A multivariate approach to early leaving can be approached in two ways. The first involves asking matched questions to samples of both university graduates (the "control group") and early leavers. The second requires administration of an intake questionnaire to all university students, with subsequent tracking to assign students to either the leaver or graduate category. The former approach relies on after-the-fact recollections and perceptions rather than on those collected at the outset (a disadvantage) but is able to deal with changes in student circumstances that occur after initial registration. In either case, the survey data could be used to specify statistical models that associate student characteristics and perceptions with their ultimate disposition as graduates or leavers.

- What, in summary, do the findings reveal about undergraduate university attrition?

  - A significant proportion of departures (40%) are, by the students' own assessments, either pre-planned or temporary.
  - There are no stark demographic or behavioural differences across the leaver groups sufficient to permit the development of a clear "risk profile" for targeted interventions.
  - A significant proportion of leavers rely to a large extent on employment income and, hence, are likely not "traditional" students in the sense of pursuing university on a full-time, dedicated basis.
  - Departure often occurs after a relatively lengthy stay (two or more sessions representing an average of one year of full-time equivalent study) rather than within the first weeks or months of enrolment.
  - Students report a wide range of impacts resulting from their university study (both academic and personal), and positive impacts outnumber negative impacts by a large margin.
  - There is no evidence of serious or systemic dissatisfaction with university services or program offerings, at least to the extent that these are identified as contributing factors in only a minority of cases.
  - More than half of all leavers, and a significant proportion in all leaver groups, attended another educational institution subsequent to their university departure.

- Academic performance issues play a critical role across many leaver groups and explanations for departure, as both the cause and effect of departure, and as the result of both actual academic failure and disregard for/failure to attend courses.

BC's Post-Secondary Transfer Environment

- The primary purpose of British Columbia's post-secondary transfer regulations is to facilitate the flow of credits from the province's college university-transfer (UT) programs to the public universities. A secondary benefit of these regulations is they facilitate credit transfer within the college sector itself, within the university sector, and from universities to colleges.

- The survey responses suggest that the transfer environment is fulfilling these objectives. Each of these inter-institutional credit transfer arrangements is either proven or implied in student responses.

- More than a third of all survey respondents reported transferring credits from another institution to the university they attended/were surveyed at. Three-quarters of these indicated they were satisfied with their credit transfer experience.

- Leavers earned an average of nearly one year of equivalent full-time credit.

- Many of the students subsequently attending other institutions would have had the opportunity to transfer these credits. The transfer rate is likely higher when students enrolled in the same or similar programs and when their overall grades are higher.

University Policy and Service Intervention

- As indicated above, the demographic characteristics, study behaviours, and perceptions of students in the various leaver groups are not sufficiently consistent or pronounced to permit the development of a risk profile. As such, it is unlikely that university attempts to target appropriate interventions toward students at risk of departure can be successful. While such attempts would certainly not be "random," they would, however, include students in their scope who appear to desire or need no such intervention, including pre-planned transfers, and professionally-focused non-degree students.

- The results do, however, identify several key warning signs or "red flags" of attrition that students could be encouraged to examine within the context of their own situations. For example, universities could make available to students a self-diagnostic tool that encouraged students to consider their risk of attrition, by encouraging them to evaluate their early academic performance, financial status, personal circumstances and program/career goals, and to seek advice and support if their responses indicate they are at relatively high risk of attrition.

- Such services, however, and the expectations placed on them, must be placed within the context of other facts. Universities have no control over the traumatic changes in life circumstances that some students encounter. University will remain for many students a vehicle for the exploration of personal and career goals; some students will voluntarily decide that they are not suited to university generally (or to a particular university) while others will find themselves socially or academically at odds with the demands of post-secondary education. No student can be forced to submit to service or program interventions, however high the risk of attrition might be. These issues suggest a limit to the potential effectiveness of university-initiated attrition prevention programs.

- Responses concerning service quality and availability do suggest that leavers might experience some benefit from improved services including academic advising, course scheduling and availability, program availability (particularly for second-entry programs like Business). Although it is probably not a decisive factor for many students, improved access to quality academic advising and clearer information about program admission/progression would likely be beneficial.

- The poor fit between expectations and the reality of the university experience appears to be a key factor for some students. To this extent, improved information flows generally would be beneficial, particularly with respect to second-entry program admission, regulations concerning academic leaves/re-registration and penalties for poor academic performance, and the availability of counseling and advising services.

University Accountability

- Though not dealt with extensively in this report, the dynamics of early leaving vary somewhat institution by institution in ways that reflect the differences in student populations at each institution and the explicit and implicit differences in the roles of each institution within the post-secondary system. As such, accountability should be considered both at the institution-specific level and for the university system overall.

- The findings of this survey:

    - Document the proportion of total students leaving university without having earned a degree;
    - Identify the reasons for their departure, particularly as these justify the classification of leavers into broad categories and the development of a general and specific typology for leaver motivation;
    - Suggest the potential and appropriate roles of the universities (and other post-secondary institutions within BC) in responding to student departures;
    - Describe the impacts on leavers of the university experience, including their perceptions of its value, their opinions toward the university and its programs/services, and the employment and educational outcomes they have encountered; and

- Point toward areas for further research, especially the construction of new indices and typologies and the development of a formal multivariate statistical explanation for attrition.

- Within this context, the accountability obligations of the universities should include the following kinds of activities:

  - Periodic reports on the number of leavers by group, in relation to the total population of students, on a university-by-university basis (for governing bodies) and for the system overall (for the Ministry) obtained through analyses of student records systems data and/or future survey(s);
  - A system report (perhaps in five years) on attempts to improve the state of survey-based attrition research with particular reference to more consistent sample definition, a more detailed analysis of specific factors influencing student departure, and other issues discussed above;
  - A commitment by the BC universities to conduct a second leavers survey that incorporates the improvements discussed above and others that are identified;
  - An exploration by the BC universities of the feasibility of developing a multivariate statistical model of student attrition using intake questionnaires or comparator graduate follow-up questionnaires; and
  - As part of the ongoing internal analyses/evaluations of university services and programs that occur at each university, an examination of the manner in which and extent to which these services or programs should respond to the needs of early leavers. In particular, academic advising, and the information flows around academic regulations and second-level program entry requirements should be examined; the development of a student self-administered attrition risk assessment tool should be explored.

Notes to Tables and Figures

1 Most percentages shown in the tables are based on either the total sample size for that leaver group, or on the total sample size net of a small number of missing or "not applicable" responses. For contingent questions, the percentages shown are based on the number of qualifying respondents.

2 Percentages in the tables for the smaller leaver groups, and for small subsets of the other leaver groups, should be interpreted with caution.

3 In the "Short Stay Registrants" table, the values for attempted and earned credits have been excluded because of missing data that skewed the relationship between the two values.

4 Where percentages should logically add to 100% and don't, it is because of a small number of "not applicable", "refused" or "don't know" responses.

5 In all tables, the percentage who applied for financial aid is less than the percentage who were awarded it. Respondents may have answered the "applied" question for the current session, and the "awarded" question for previous sessions, or may have included automatic scholarship or bursary awards in their response.

6 GPAs were standardized from 4 different grading systems. On the 100-point scale, A=80+, B=70-79.9, C=60-69.9, and D or less=0-59.9. On the 9-point scale, A=7+, B=4-6.9, C=2-3.9, and D or less=0-1.9. On the 4.33-point scale, A=3.67+, B=2.67- 3.669, C=1.67-2.669, and D or less=0-1.669. On the 4-point scale, A=3.5+, B=2.5-3.49, C=1.5-2.49, and D or less=0-1.49.

7 All cumulative GPA percentages exclude UBC.

8 All cumulative credits percentages exclude UBC.

9 For all multiple response questions, the percentages are based on the number of multiple responses rather than the number of respondents. This applies to all post-coded verbal response questions.

10 Percentages of 0.0 on Tables 3-7 include both "true zero" percentages and percentages less than 0.05.

11 In the text, reference is made to "specific", "cluster" and "forced" choice questions/responses. Specific responses are the responses to the open-ended questions, as post-coded. (See Table 2, Reasons for Leaving, Top ten individual reasons; and Tables 3-7, detailed responses.) Cluster responses are specific responses aggregated into broad categories. (See Table 2, Reasons for Leaving, Clusters of reasons; and Tables 3-7, bold text subtotals and percentages.) Forced choice responses are responses (e.g. Yes/No) to questions. (Table 2, Reasons for Leaving, Response to forced choice.)

Appendix

EARLY LEAVERS SURVEY FROM BC UNIVERSITIES – Jan. 28/00

Q: INTRO ----------

Hello I'm calling from (name of firm). We have been contracted by BC universities to conduct a survey of former (name of university) students who discontinued their studies before graduating. We recognize that there are many reasons why people do not complete a degree, and we are interested in determining if there were significant barriers or problems at (name of university) that prevented you from completing. Your responses will be held in complete confidence and will never be revealed. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you can discontinue the survey at any time. The survey will take about 15 minutes. May I do the survey with you at this time?

1 YES
2 NO

IF (ANS is 2) SKIPTO END1

Do you have any questions before we begin?

SECTION A: EDUCATION CONFIRMATION

Q:A1 ----------

Were you registered at (name of university) at any time from the fall of 1997 to the spring of 1999?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

IF (ANS is not 1) SKIPTO END3

Q:A1A ----------

Are you currently registered at (name of university)?
(If YES, ask "Are you currently registered in an undergraduate or graduate program?")
(If UNDERGREADUATE, ask, "When did you return to <name of university> to continue your studies?")

1 YES – Undergrad, returned in 1999 or earlier	SKIP TO END3
5 YES – Undergrad, returned in January 2000 or later	SKIP TO END3
6 YES – Graduate program	SKIP TO H1
2 NO	
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE	SKIP TO END3
4 REFUSED	SKIP TO END3

IF (ANS is not 2) SKIPTO END3

Q: A2 ----------

Did you receive a degree/diploma or complete a designated professional program at (name of university) as a result of your 1997-1999 enrollment?

1 YES – Completed undergraduate degree/diploma	SKIP TO END2
5 YES – Completed post-degree program (eg. Upgrade for teacher's, nurses, etc.)	SKIP TO H1
2 NO	
6 NO – Completed requirements for Graduate Program	SKIP TO H1
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE	SKIP TO END2
4 REFUSED	SKIP TO END2

IF (ANS is not 2) SKIPTO END2

SECTION B: REASONS FOR ATTENDING

Q: B1 ----------

We would now like to ask you about your experience at (name of university).

Did you know what area of study you wanted to pursue prior to enrolling at (name of university)?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: B2 ----------

Did you intend to receive a degree/diploma when first enrolling at (name of university)?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: B3 ----------

What were your goals for attending (name of university) when first enrolling?

Q: B4 ----------

Apart from (name of university), did you apply to any other Post-Secondary Institutions?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

IF (ANS is not 1) SKIPTO B5

Q: B4A ----------

Was (name of university) your first choice of places to attend?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: B5 ———————————————————

What was your main reason for selecting (name of university)?
(Unprompted)

1. CLOSE TO MY FAMILY
2. FAMILY OR FRIENDS WERE THERE
3. THE CAMPUS LIFESTYLE
4. MY PROGRAM WAS AVAILABLE THERE
5. THE QUALITY OR REPUTATION OF THE PROGRAM
6. LIVING COSTS WOULD BE LOWER THERE
7. NOT ACCEPTED ELSEWHERE
8. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION
9. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS WERE EASIER AT THIS INSTITUTION
10. OTHER

Q: B6 ———————————————————

Students attend university for a variety of reasons. I will now ask you why you selected (name of university) in a slightly different way. I am going to read you a series of reasons that may or may not have influenced your decision to attend (name of university). On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is to a great extent and 4 is not at all, please identify the extent to which of the following influenced your decision to attend (name of university).

Q: B6A ———————————————————

I attended (name of university) because it was close to my family.

1. TO A GREAT EXTENT
2. TO SOME EXTENT
3. TO A SMALL EXTENT
4. NOT AT ALL
5. NOT APPLICABLE
6. DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
7. REFUSED

Q: B6B ———————————————————

I attended (name of university) because friends or family were there.

SHOW LIST EXTENT

Q: B6C ———————————————————

I attended (name of university) because of the campus lifestyle there.

SHOW LIST EXTENT

Q: B6D ----------

I attended (name of university) because my program was available there.

SHOW LIST EXTENT

Q: B6E ----------

I attended (name of university) because of the quality or reputation of the program.

SHOW LIST EXTENT

Q: B6F ----------

I attended (name of university) because my living costs would be lower there.

SHOW LIST EXTENT

Q: B6G ----------

Interviewer: IF (ANS = 2 in B4) SKIP to B6H)

I attended (name of university) because I was not accepted elsewhere.

Q: B6H ----------

I attended (name of university) because of the geographic location.

Q: B6I ----------

I attended (name of university) because the entry requirements were easier.

SECTION C: TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY

THE FOLLOWING SET OF QUESTIONS IS RELATED TO WHAT YOU EXPERIENCED IN YOUR TRANSITION TO (NAME OF UNIVERSITY).

Q: C1 ***NEW***----------

Overall, how would you describe your first month at (name of university)? Would you say that it was...

1 POSITIVE
2 NEGATIVE
3 NEITHER

IF (ANS Is 1) SKIP TO C2
IF (ANS Is 2) SKIP TO C3
IF (ANS Is 3) SKIP TO C5

Q: C2 NEW----------

What was positive about the first month?

SKIP TO C5

Q: C3 NEW ----------

What was negative about the first month?

Q: C5 ----------

At the time you started at (name of university) which statement best describes your living arrangements?

1 LIVING AT HOME
2 LIVING WITH RELATIVES
3 LIVING IN RESIDENCE
4 LIVING ALONE OFF CAMPUS
5 LIVING WITH ROOMATES OFF CAMPUS
6 LIVING WITH SPOUSE/PARTNER
7 OTHER

SECTION D: SATISFACTION WITH UNIVERSITY

Q: D1 ----------

We would now like to ask you a series of questions regarding your satisfaction with (name of university). If the question doesn't apply to you please say so.

Were you successful in registering in the program you wanted to take at (name of university)?

1 YES
2 NO
3 NOT APPLICABLE
4 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
5 REFUSED

Q: D1A ----------

If you transferred to (name of university) from another institution, were you satisfied with the number of credits you were able to transfer?

1 YES
2 NO
3 NOT APPLICABLE
4 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
5 REFUSED

Q: D1B ***NEW*** ----------

Thinking of the courses you WANTED to register in during your last session/semester at (name of university), would you say you were able to register in...

1 ALL OF THEM
2 MOST OF THEM
3 SOME OF THEM
4 NONE OF THEM
5 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE

6 REFUSED

Q: D2 ----------

On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is very satisfied and 4 is very dissatisfied please state how satisfied you were with the following at (name of university). If the question doesn't apply to you please say so.

How satisfied were you with the availability of your professors outside scheduled class time during your last session or semester?
Would you say...

1 VERY SATISFIED
2 SATISFIED
3 DISSATISFIED
4 VERY DISSATISFIED
5 NOT APPLICABLE
6 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
7 REFUSED

Q: D2A ----------

How satisfied were you with the quality of teaching in your classes during your last session or semester?
Would you say...

SHOW LIST SATISFIED

Q: D2B ----------

How satisfied are you that your tests, assignments and examinations were graded fairly at (name of university)?

SHOW LIST SATISFIED

Q: D3 ----------

How satisfied were you with the University Library

SHOW LIST SATISFIED

Q: D3A ----------

How satisfied were you with the Computing labs

SHOW LIST SATISFIED

Q: D3B ----------

How satisfied were you with the Science labs (e.g. Chemistry, Physics, Biology, etc)

SHOW LIST SATISFIED

Q: D4 ----------

Interviewer: ***If cohort file shows SESS_ONE = Y ask D4A***
If cohort file shows SESS_ONE = N ask D4B

Q: D4A ———————————————————

About how many months in total did you actively attend classes at (name of university)?

Q: D4B ———————————————————

About how many months in your last session/semester did you actively attend classes at (name of university)?

Q: D4C ———————————————————

Do you feel you attended (name of university) long enough to have been impacted by your experience in any way?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

IF (ANS is not 1) SKIP TO E1

Q: D4D ———————————————————

What did you get out of your university experience?

Q: D5———————————————————

I am now going to ask you a similar question in a slightly different way.

Using a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 is to a great extent and 4 is not at all, please rate to what extent your (name of university) experience contributed to each of the following:

1. TO A GREAT EXTENT
2. TO SOME EXTENT
3. TO A SMALL EXTENT
4. NOT AT ALL
5. NOT APPLICABLE
6. DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
7. REFUSED

Q: D5A

To what extent did your (name of university) experience contribute to your personal growth?

SHOW LIST EXTENT

Q: D5B

To what extent did your (name of university) experience result in any academic benefit?

SHOW LIST EXTENT

SECTION E: REASONS FOR LEAVING

Q: E1 ———————————————

(Name of university) would like to understand the reason students leave the university before earning their degrees. We understand that you may have been required to withdraw for academic reasons, that you may have planned to leave when you did, or that you may be planning on returning to (name of university). We would like you to answer the following questions as candidly as you can. All information collected is strictly confidential and will never be attributed to any respondent.

Q: E1A ———————————————

(Interviewer: Unprompted and note as many as responses as possible)

What was your main reason for leaving (name of university)?

Q: E2 ———————————————

I am now going to ask you similar questions in a slightly different way. Please answer yes or no to the following questions.

Q: E2A ———————————————

Were you required to withdraw for academic reasons?

1. YES
2. NO
3. DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
4. REFUSED

Q: E2B ———————————————

Did you plan to transfer to another institution when you first attended (name of university)?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: E2C ———————————————

Did poor grades or academic difficulties affect your decision to leave (name of university)?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: E2D ———————————————

Did financial difficulties affect your decision to leave (name of university)?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE

4 REFUSED

Q: E2E ———————————————————

Did family or personal circumstances affect your decision to leave (name of university)?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: E2F ———————————————————

Did finding a job affect your decision to leave (name of university)?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: E2G ———————————————————

Did you discover that (name of university) was not for you?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: E3———————————————————

The next set of questions involves funding for your university education. All information will be held in strictest confidence and will never be attributed to you.

Did you apply for government student financial assistance?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: E3A ———————————————————

Were you awarded government student financial assistance?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
4 REFUSED

IF (ANS is not 2) SKIP TO Q:E3C

Q: E3B

Did not being awarded government student financial assistance prevent you from continuing in your university studies?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: E3C

What were the three main sources of funding for your university education?

(Interviewer please ensure that the employment income was NOT coop program generated)

1 EMPLOYMENT INCOME (other than coop)
2 INVESTMENT INCOME
3 BURSARY/GRANTS
4 SCHOLARSHIPS/AWARDS/PRIZES
5 PARENTS/RELATIVES
6 PERSONAL SAVINGS
7 PERSONAL LOAN
8 SPOUSE/PARTNER
9 FRIEND
10 EMPLOYER SUBSIDY
11 PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT EG. CO-OP
12 GOVERNMENT STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
13 MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS
14 FIRST NATIONS
15 OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
16 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE/REFUSED/NO FURTHER RESPONSE

Q: E3D

What was the primary source of funding for your university education? (Choose only one)

1 EMPLOYMENT INCOME
2 INVESTMENT INCOME
3 BURSARY/GRANTS
4 SCHOLARSHIPS/AWARDS/PRIZES
5 PARENTS/RELATIVES
6 PERSONAL SAVINGS
7 PERSONAL LOAN
8 SPOUSE/PARTNER
9 FRIEND
10 EMPLOYER SUBSIDY
11 PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT EG. CO-OP
12 GOVERNMENT STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
13 MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS
14 FIRST NATIONS
15 OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
16 DON'T KNOW/UNSURE/REFUSED/NO FURTHER RESPONSE

Q: E4 ———————————————

The University provides various services to students. Please state whether you used the following advising services prior to making your decision to leave (name of university).

Did you use Academic Advising?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: E4A ———————————————————

Did you use Personal Counseling Services?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: E4B ———————————————————

Did you use Learning or Study Skills Services?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q: E5 ———————————————————

Did you seek advice from anyone else about your decision to leave (name of university) before leaving?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

IF (ANS is not 1) SKIPTO E7

Q: E6 ———————————————————

Who did you seek advice from? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)

1 FACULTY MEMBER
2 FRIEND OR SPOUSE
3 PARENT
4 COACH
5 RESIDENCE ADVISOR
6 FORMER OR PRESENT EMPLOYER
7 OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
8 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
9 REFUSED / NO FURTHER RESPONSE

Q: E7 ———————————————————

At the time of your departure what were your overall perceptions about (name of university)? Would you say they were...

1 VERY POSITIVE
2 POSITIVE

3 NEGATIVE
4 VERY NEGATIVE
5 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
6 REFUSED

Q: E8 ———————————————

(Interviewer please prompt and get as much information as possible)

What could the university have done, or what more could the university have done, to assist you at the time you were deciding to leave?

1 NOTHING
2 OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)

SECTION F: DESTINATION AFTER LEAVING

Q: F1 ———————————————

Since leaving (name of university) have you attended or are you now attending another educational institution on a full or part-time basis?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

IF (ANS is not 1) SKIPTO F3

Q: F1A ———————————————

Which institution was/is it?

INSTITUTION CODES

201 BCIT
202 Camosun
203 Capilano
204 Cariboo
205 Douglas
206 Emily Carr
207 Fraser Valley
208 Indigenous Government
209 Justice
210 Kwantlen
211 Langara
212 Malaspina
213 New Caledonia
214 Nicola Valley
215 North Island
216 Northern Lights
217 Northwest

218 Okanagan
219 Open/OLA
220 Rockies/East Kootenay
221 Selkirk
222 VCC
249 other BC college/institute
250 SFU
251 UBC
252 UVic
253 UNBC
254 RRU
299 other BC university
301 Alberta PSE institution
302 Saskatchewan PSE institution
303 Manitoba PSE institution
304 Ontario PSE institution
305 Quebec PSE institution
306 New Brunswick PSE institution
307 Nova Scotia PSE institution
308 PEI PSE institution
309 Newfoundland PSE institution
310 Territories (Yukon, NWT, Nunavut) PSE institution
399 unknown/other Canadian PSE secondary institution
401 Alberta unknown institution
402 Saskatchewan unknown institution
403 Manitoba unknown institution
404 Ontario unknown institution
405 Quebec unknown institution
406 New Brunswick unknown institution
407 Nova Scotia unknown institution
408 PEI unknown institution
409 Newfoundland unknown institution
410 territories (Yukon, NWT, Nunavut) unknown institution
499 unknown/other Canadian institution
501 secondary equivalent
502 post-secondary equivalent
599 unknown other country type

Q: F1B

Approximately how many months since leaving (name of university) did you start at (new institution)?

Q: F2_____

Did you transfer to the same program at (new institution identified in F1A)?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE

4 REFUSED

Q: F3 ———————————————

We would now like to ask you some questions regarding your activities since leaving (name of university).

Q: F3A

What was your main activity in the first 3 months after leaving (name of university)?

1 WORKING FULL-TIME
2 WORKING PART-TIME
3 SEEKING WORK
4. HAVE A JOB, WAITING TO START
5 TRAVELLING
6 CARING FOR OWN CHILDREN/PARENTS/FAMILY MEMBER
7 GOING TO SCHOOL
8 FAMILY OBLIGATION
9 NOTHING
10 ILLNESS
95 OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
96 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
97 REFUSED

Q: F4 ———————————————

What is your main activity now?

1 WORKING FULL-TIME
2 WORKING PART-TIME
3 SEEKING WORK
4 HAVE A JOB, WAITING TO START
5 TRAVELLING
6 CARING FOR OWN CHILDREN/PARENTS/FAMILY MEMBER
7 GOING TO SCHOOL
8 FAMILY OBLIGATION
9 NOTHING
10 ILLNESS
95 OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
96 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
97 REFUSED

IF (ANS > 2) SKIPTO G1

Q: F6 ———————————————

I'd now like to ask you several questions regarding your current employment.

Q: F6A

What is your job title? (e.g. teacher, office clerk,
social worker.)

Q: F7 ----------

In this work, what are your most important activities or duties? (e.g. consultation, instructing students, designing buildings, auditing statements.)

Q:F8 ----------

For whom do you work? (Name of business, government department or agency, or person.)

Q:F9 ----------

What kind of business, industry or service is this? (e.g. federal government, aerospace industry, forestry services).

Q: F10 ----------

Are you a paid worker or self-employed?

1 PAID WORKER
2 SELF-EMPLOYED
95 OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
97 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
98 REFUSED

Q:F11 ----------

Working your usual hours, approximately what is your gross annual income from your main job (including commissions, etc.) before deductions?

1 YES (ABLE TO PROVIDE RESPONSE) (TO ENTER AMOUNT)
2 UNWILLING TO RESPOND
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE

IF (ANSWER is 2) SKIPTO G1

Q: F11A ----------

ENTER THE BASE SALARY AMOUNT.

(ASK FOR BEST ESTIMATE IF UNABLE TO GIVE AMOUNT)

ENTER AMOUNT HERE =>

Q: F11B ----------

You said your salary is

I would just like to confirm that this is your annual (yearly) salary.

IF NOT, ASK:

In what time period is this amount earned?

1 YES, ANNUAL SALARY

2 MONTHLY
3 BI-MONTHLY (TWICE A MONTH)
4 EVERY TWO WEEKS
5 WEEKLY
6 DAILY
7 HOURLY
8 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
9 REFUSED

IF (ANS > 7) SKIPTO G1

Q: F11C ———————————————————

Based on what you have told me, your annual salary was calculated to be

$_____

Does this sound right to you?

1 YES, SEEMS CORRECT
2 NO, IT IS WRONG (PRESS TO RE-ENTER)
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

SECTION G: RETURN TO UNIVERSITY

Q: G1 ———————————————————

How likely is it that you will return to (name of university) within the next 12 months?

1 VERY LIKELY
2 LIKELY
3 NOT LIKELY
4 NOT AT ALL LIKELY
5 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
6 REFUSED

SECTION H: DEMOGRAPHICS

Q:H1 ———————————————————

One goal of the British Columbia universities is to provide educational opportunities and a learning environment free from discrimination on the basis of gender, race or disability. The following questions will allow us to assess the extent to which we have provided fair educational opportunities.

Are you limited in the kind or amount of activity you can do because of a long-term physical condition, mental condition or health problem, that is, one that has lasted or is expected to last six months or more?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q:H2 ----------

Are you an aboriginal person? Some examples are Inuit, Metis and North American Indian - either status or non-status?

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

Q:H3 ----------

Are you part of a visible minority in Canada? Some examples of visible minorities are: Black, East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean), Indo-Pakistani, Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian, West Asian.

1 YES
2 NO
3 DON'T KNOW / UNSURE
4 REFUSED

SKIPTO END3

Q:END1 ----------

Is there a better time to contact you to complete the survey?

1 YES (ESTABLISH TIME)
2 NO

SKIPTO END3

Q: END2 ----------

We would only like to follow-up with people who have not completed their degree or diploma at (name of university).

Q: END3 ----------

Thank you very much for your time.